

GCC head: Iraqi invasion of Kuwait is hard to forget

DUBAI (R) — The head of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council said on Tuesday Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in 1990 was still fresh in the memories of Gulf Arabs.

"Any nation in the world that could have experienced what the Kuwaiti people went through during the Gulf crisis will find it difficult to forget that easily," GCC Secretary-General Jameel Al-Hujailan told the Qatari news agency.

"Arab reconciliation is important and vital... but circumstances in the region, differences and Iraq's tardiness in implementing international resolutions, added to the suffering and pain of the Iraqi people," he added without elaborating.

Diplomats said Mr. Hujailan's statement, ahead of a GCC summit in Doha on Dec. 7, indicated the group was not ready for an early reconciliation with Iraq. It also aimed at calming public speculation about GCC rifts over normalising ties with Iraq.

Member states in the GCC — a political and economic alliance grouping Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar — have individually voiced differing opinions on rapprochement with Iraq.

The UAE, Qatar and Oman have softened their stand on Iraq since the invasion, but Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the region's dominant economic and political power, have maintained a tough stand.

Kuwait said last week it had turned down a call by UAE President Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan to mend fractured relations with Iraq.

The UAE, apart from its concerns over the suffering of the Iraqi people under six years of crippling U.N. sanctions, is fearful that a weak Iraq will play into the hands of the Gulf's non-Arab heavyweight Iran, just across the waterway.

Saudi Arabia on Monday welcomed Iraq's acceptance last week of United Nations terms to implement a deal signed in May allowing it to sell oil worth \$2 billion over six months to pay for food and medicine.

Gunmen reportedly attack house of Iraqi Shiite leader

CAIRO (AP) — Unidentified gunmen have attacked the house of a prominent Shiite Muslim leader in Iraq's holy city of Najaf, killing one of his attendants and wounding two others, a major Shiite opposition group said Monday.

In a statement faxed to the Associated Press in Cairo, the London-based Al Khoei Foundation said it held the Iraqi authorities responsible for the Nov. 25 attack on the house of Grand Ayatollah Ali Hussein Sistani.

"This is a terrorist and a provocative attack against the post of the supreme Shiite guide... full responsibility of which should be shouldered by the Iraqi authorities," said the group, whose claim could not be independently confirmed.

It said the 65-year-old Sistani also used his home for his public religious activities, but made no mention of who could have been the target of the attack.

But Hamid Al Bayati, spokesman of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq — another Iraqi Shiite opposition group — told the AP on Monday that two men disguised as Shiite clergy-

men went into Ayatollah Sistani's house asking to see him.

But when they saw his son, Mohammad Ridha, they pulled handguns fitted with silencers and started shooting at him, said Mr. Bayati, who was speaking by telephone from London.

The three attendants — the victim and the two wounded others — shielded Mohammed Ridha with their bodies, allowing him to escape injury, he added.

Mr. Bayati said one of the two attackers was later identified by local residents of Najaf as being a security officer.

Ayatollah Sistani wields a great deal of influence among Iraq's large Shiite community, whose relations with the country's ruling clique from the rival and mainstream Sunni sect are fraught with tension and mutual suspicion.

A short-lived Shiite uprising in southern Iraq was suppressed by Saddam Hussein's army in 1991. Gulf war allies led by the United States have enforced a no-fly zone over southern Iraq since then to protect the area's Shiite population from reprisals by the army.



EUROPEAN TRADE PROMOTION: Iraq's Minister of Health Umeed Madhat Mubarak speaks to Peter Anderson, representative of the British company Jaeger Tonnie, as he opens an European trade promotion exhibition for medical, pharmaceutical and infant care products in Baghdad on Tuesday (Reuters photo)

Netanyahu, U.S. barred Arafat invitation to Lisbon — reports

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The United States, at the urging of Israeli leader Benjamin Netanyahu, pressured Portugal not to invite Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat to an international conference this week in Lisbon, Israeli newspapers reported Tuesday.

U.S. officials stepped in after Mr. Netanyahu told them he would refuse any attempt to organize a meeting with Mr. Arafat on the sidelines of the conference of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe held Monday and Tuesday in the Portuguese capital, the Yediot Aharanot and Haaretz dailies reported.

At Mr. Netanyahu's urging, Washington convinced Portuguese leaders to give up plans to invite Mr. Arafat in hopes of arranging an Israeli-Palestinian summit, they said.

Pressure has been mounting for a Netanyahu-Arafat encounter to unblock stalled negotiations on Israel's long-delayed troop withdrawal from Hebron, the last West Bank city under full military occupation.

Mr. Netanyahu told Israeli reporters in Lisbon that the negotiations had been 99 per cent concluded and that "if there is Palestinian goodwill, we can finalise an agreement on Hebron."

But he said Lisbon was not the proper venue for a summit with Mr. Arafat. "If

what is wanted is a purposeful meeting, it should have purpose, and in the time frame allotted to meetings between leaders in Lisbon, serious work cannot be done," he said. "If a meeting were held here, it would have been very superficial."

A meeting with Mr. Arafat will be a result of willingness on his part to complete the negotiations about Hebron," he added.

A top Arafat adviser, Nabil Abu Rdaina, echoed Mr. Netanyahu's view and denied that the Palestinians had ever considered a summit in Lisbon.

"There were no plans for any such meeting in Lisbon," he told AFP.

"The position of the president concerning a meeting

with Mr. Netanyahu is well-known, before such a summit we first need to have agreement on many issues," he said.

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators have been wrangling for two months over the terms of Israel's troop redeployment from Hebron, which should have taken place in March but has been held up by Mr. Netanyahu's right-wing government.

Mr. Netanyahu has demanded that the Hebron withdrawal plan signed by Israel's former Labour government be changed to provide improved security guarantees for some 420 Jewish settlers living amid the city's 120,000 Palestinians.

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Lawyer seeks JD1 million in Abbadi-Shihan lawsuit

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A lawyer who has filed a lawsuit against a former deputy and a weekly tabloid editor accusing them of undermining national unity said on Tuesday he was seeking JD1 million in damages.

Lawyer Ahmad Habboul, the plaintiff told the Jordan Times. "If I win the case I am planning to donate the money to establish a centre to fight regionalism in Jordan."

Mr. Habboul's lawsuit is against Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi, a former deputy

and now a columnist, and Jihad Momani, former editor of Shihan weekly.

The two are being tried at the Amman Court of First Instance on charges of inciting people to criminal acts and fuelling "bigotry" in an interview with Dr. Abbadi and Shihan was published in its June 29, 1996 issue.

They both pleaded not guilty to all charges in August.

Mr. Habboul was due to testify Tuesday, but the court session was postponed for the third time in two months because Mr. Momani failed to appear at

court. The new date is set Dec. 30.

Mr. Habboul charged that the remarks that Mr. Abbadi, a former deputy from Amman Governorate, had made in the Shihan interview were "racist and undermining national unity."

Dr. Abbadi was quoted in the interview as saying: "There are several threats against Jordanian identity, both internal and external, as Jordan is threatened with becoming a substitute country for the Palestinians," and "Palestinians are not Jordanians under any circumstances."

Dr. Abbadi has told Prosecutor General Jamal Zougby, according to Mr. Habboul, his remarks could not be construed as insulting Palestinians.

"What I meant in my interview was to call for liberating Palestine and to form an independent Palestinian state in its own land," Mr. Habboul said, quoting Dr. Abbadi's statement to the prosecutor.

According to Mr. Habboul, if the defendants were found guilty, they could receive up to three years imprisonment.

NEWS IN BRIEF

4 Iranian diplomats defect — opposition

NICOSIA (AFP) — The Iranian ambassador to Tajikistan and three other Iranian diplomats have abandoned their posts and are seeking political asylum, an Iranian opposition group said Tuesday. "Ali Ashraf Mojtahed Shabestari, the Khomeini regime's ambassador to the republic of Tajikistan, has defected from the regime and requested political asylum," the National Council of resistance of Iran said in a statement. The Paris-based Iranian opposition group said that an Iranian diplomat in Pakistan and "at least two others" in European countries have also defected. The group did not say when the alleged defections occurred and the claims could not be independently confirmed. The Iranian opposition group said that three diplomats posted in Germany who were planning to defect were recalled to Tehran and six members of the embassy staff were dismissed. According to the National Council, the Iranian intelligence ministry has dispatched agents to Europe to review personnel at various embassies.

Lebanese troops seize 488 kg of hashish

BEIRUT (R) — Lebanese soldiers have seized 488 kilograms of hashish in northern Lebanon, police sources said on Tuesday. They said the drugs were found in plastic bags in a cave near the northern village of Alma. The haul was worth about \$200,000, the sources added. Last month, Syrian forces seized 500 kilograms of hashish in eastern Lebanon's Syrian-occupied Bekaa Valley. Lebanese and Syrian forces have since 1992 drastically reduced cannabis and opium poppy cultivation in Lebanon, especially in the Bekaa Valley, a centre for the lucrative drugs trade during the 1975-90 civil war.

Saudis seize sex stimulants 'smuggled from Israel'

DUBAI (R) — Saudi Arabia has seized banned chewing gum and drops that claimed to improve male sexual performance, a Saudi newspaper reported on Tuesday. The stimulants, sold discreetly by pharmacies run by "weak souls" in the kingdom, were apparently smuggled from Israel, economic daily Al-Eqtisadiyah said. Saudi Arabia and Israel are officially still in a state of war since the 1948 Arab-Israeli conflict. Al-Eqtisadiyah did not disclose the quantity of goods seized from the pharmacies but said they were mostly made in Spain and Germany. Pharmacies were selling them for 100 riyals (\$26). "Before, these products were used on a limited scale," the newspaper added. "But now, they are getting more widespread." Last year, Saudi Arabia executed four Turks for trying to smuggle aphrodisiac drugs into the country. The executions caused an uproar in Turkey and prompted Ankara to send an envoy to Saudi Arabia to try to save more Turks on death row there.

U.S. evacuation of Kurdish aid workers starts today

ANKARA (AFP) — The U.S. evacuation of nearly 4,500 Kurdish aid workers and their families from northern Iraq will begin on Wednesday, a Turkish foreign ministry spokesman said Tuesday.

The evacuation "of these Kurds from the north begins Wednesday and could last between 10 and 15 days," Sermet Atacani said.

The Kurds will cross from northern Iraq to the Turkish border town of Silopi before travelling to Guam, a U.S. outpost in the Pacific, beginning Dec. 6.

In Guam they will be given the necessary documentation to enter the United States proper.

"We are helping in this evacuation in a humanitarian context, as in the two former operations," the spokesman said. In September, U.S.

authorities airlifted about 2,140 Kurds who worked for the U.S. government.

These Kurds were working for humanitarian organisations in northern Iraq within the framework of the allied operation aimed at providing aid and protection to Iraqi Kurds.

An additional 600 Kurdish opposition activists were evacuated in October to protect them from reprisals by Iraqi agents.

But the operation beginning Wednesday would be the largest group to be taken out of northern Iraq since August.

U.S. officials have maintained that Iraqi agents are operating in northern Iraq and have targeted Kurds linked with the U.S. government.

No mention has been made of any further evacuation operations, Mr. Atacani said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

- 14:05Muppet Show
- 14:30Circus
- 15:00Jeu — Pyramide
- 15:30Serie — Les Compagnons de L'Adventure
- 16:00 Doc. — Earth Revealed
- 16:30Blizzard Island
- 17:00News Flash
- 17:02The Adventures and Kelly
- 18:00L'Esuavia
- 19:00Le Journal
- 19:15Magazine — Sports
- 19:30El Musique
- 19:35News Headlines
- 19:35The Four Seasons
- 20:00Super stars of Action
- 20:30Challenges
- 21:10NBA Basketball
- 22:00News in English
- 22:25Bugs
- 23:15Hart to Hart
- 23:59 Comedy — Who's The Boss?

PRAYER TIMES

- 04:53Fajr
- 06:15(Sunrise)Dhuha
- 11:25Dhuhr
- 14:14Asr
- 16:36Maghreb
- 17:58Isha

CHURCHES

- St. Mary of Nazareth Church Sweifieh, Tel. 810740
- Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
- St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
- Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
- De la Solle Church Tel.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

661757, Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366 Anglican Church Tel. 652826 Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331 Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261 St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751 Amman International Church Tel. 827126 Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328 German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 845457 The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654932 Church of Nazarene Tel. 675691 The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295 English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Dr. Mukhlis Halaseh819220
- Dr. Rami Sukkar856457
- Dr. Fadi Al Khalib86456
- Dr. Yousef Al Faqih90104
- Firas pharmacy661912
- Ferdows pharmacy390280
- Al Asema pharmacy637055
- Al Salam pharmacy636730
- Yacoub pharmacy644945
- Shmeisani pharmacy 637660
- Nairoukh pharmacy623672
- Najib pharmacy847632
- IRBID: Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir 276852
- Al Quds pharmacy1
- ZARQA: Dr. Issa Al Omari901266
- Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES

- Food Control Centre 637111
- Civil Defence Department 661111
- Civil Defence Immediate Rescue 630341
- Civil Defence Emergency 199
- Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 20, Aqaba 26 Humidity readings: Amman 74 per cent, Aqaba 51 per cent.

Fire Brigade

- 617101
- Blood Bank775121
- Highway Police843402
- Traffic Police896390
- Public Security Department 630321
- Hotel Complaints605800
- Price Complaints661176
- Water and Sewerage Complaints897467
- Amman Municipality Complaints787111
- Telephone Information (directory assistance)121
- Overseas Calls010230
- Central Amman Telephone Repairs623101
- Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101
- Jordan Television773111
- Radio Jordan774111
- Water Authority680100
- Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
- Electric Power Company 636381
- RJ Flight Information 08-53200
- Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

- AMMAN: Hussein Medical Centre 813813/32
- Khalidi Maternity, 644281/6
- Akileh Maternity, 642441/2
- Jahar Amman Maternity 642362
- Malhas, J. Amman636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071 Shmeisani Hospital 669131 University Hospital 845845 Al-Muasher Hospital 6672279

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/37 Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6 Italian, Al-Muhajreen 77101/3 Al-Bashir,775111/26 Army, Marka891611/15 Queen Alia Hospital 602240/50 Amal Hospital674155 The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery865199 ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)983323 Zarqa National Hospital (09)900560 Ibn Sina Hospital (09)986732 Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990

IRRID: Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555 Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272275 Ibn Al Nafees Hospital (02)247100 AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

- QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT This information is supplied

by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200 where it should always be verified. Information on other flights are supplied on phone 08 (52700) or 08(53250).

ARRIVALS

- Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights 07:25Damascus (RJ) 08:00Jeddah (add) (RJ) 08:35Jeddah (RJ) 08:50Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ) 09:40Larnaca (RJ) 14:45 New York, Amsterdam (RJ) 16:25Toronto, Montreal (RJ) 16:45Istanbul (RJ) 17:45Madrid, Geneva (RJ) 17:50Frankfurt, Vienna (RJ) 18:10Berlin, London (RJ) 18:50Paris, Brussels (RJ) 19:15Rome, Istanbul (RJ) 19:50Singapore (add) (RJ) 23:10Beirut (RJ) 00:10Cairo (RJ) 03:55Singapore, Kuala Lumpur (RJ)

Other Flights

- 09:30Cairo (MS) 10:00Sanaa, Hudaidah (Y) 10:30Jeddah (SV) 12:35Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK) 12:40Abu Dhabi (GF) 13:30Tunis (TU)

15:05Vienna (OS) 15:45Algiers (AH) 20:10Beirut (ME) 21:00Paris, Damascus (AF) 21:40Tel Aviv (LY) 22:20Larnaca (CY) 22:45Athens, Beirut (OA) 23:10Istanbul (TK) 23:15Amsterdam (KL) 01:55London (BA)

DEPARTURES

- Royal Wings (RW) Flights 09:20Aqaba (RW) 18:55Tel Aviv (RW) 09:45Rome (RJ) 10:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ) 10:40Berlin, London (RJ) 11:10Istanbul (RJ) 11:25Casablanca (RJ) 19:30Colombo (RJ) 19:35Beirut (RJ) 20:00Bombay (RJ) 20:05Riyadh, Dhahran (RJ) 20:10Cairo (RJ) 20:15 Kuala Lumpur (add) (RJ) 20:30New Delhi (RJ) 21:00Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ) 21:15Dubai, Muscat (RJ) 22:45Sanaa (RJ) 05:30Jeddah (add) (RJ)

Other Flights

- 07:45Beirut (ME) 10:20Cairo (MS) 11:00Hudaidah, Sanaa (Y) 12:00Jeddah (SV)

13:30Bahrain, Abu Dhabi (GF) 13:50Beirut, Abu Dhabi, Karachi (PK) 14:30Tunis (TU) 15:50Vienna (OS) 16:30Sharjah (AH) 22:50Tel Aviv (LY) 23:10Larnaca (CY) 23:55Damascus, Paris (AF)

Royal Wings (RW) Flights

- 09:50Marka (RW) 20:50Aqaba (RW)

MARKET PRICES

- Upper/lower price in fils per kg. Apple700/500 Banana550/550 Bananas (imported)850/550 Cabbage80/40 Carrot260/150 Cauliflower150/100 Cucumber (large)120/100 Cucumber (small)210/150 Eggplant120/60 Garlic750/550 Grapes500/250 Grape fruit220/170 Lemon360/200 Marrow (large)90/50 Marrow (small)160/100 Onion (green)200/120 Onion (dry)170/80 Orange550/400 Pear650/500 Pepper (hot)280/150 Pepper (sweet)300/150 Potato310/180 Spinach160/100 String Bean450/350 Tomato180/120

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Home News

Political parties study definition of programme

By Christina Schlegel
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Four years subsequent to the 1992 reintroduction of political parties in Jordan, such groups are still beginning their development and learning process.

This was the sentiment expressed by Olaf Koendgen from the German Konrad Adenauer Foundation in a Tuesday interview with the Jordan Times.

Drawing this conclusion from a two-day workshop regarding the role of political parties and which was co-organised by the KAF, Mr. Koendgen stated that parties must take initiative and concentrate on what he called the "definition and function" of political parties.

According to his definition, political parties must primarily develop a political programme and present alternatives differentiating one from the other in the public eye.

"For the time being, the Islamic Action Front (IAF) is the only opposition party with a definite programme," Mr. Koendgen said.

He lamented that indecisive behaviour undermines party work and success.

"It begins with the common problem of attracting membership and is compounded by a lack of media notice which results in party anonymity and thus [completes the cycle by] causing difficulty in attracting new members," Mr. Koendgen said.

Jordanian parties, he continued, have not been able to represent a viable alternative to the [current] government and, therefore, are not able to present themselves persuasively; they have no profile.

He also called for an amelioration of the relationship between government and parties.

Mr. Koendgen explained that in Germany political organisations are an established part of the democratic system and partially financed by the government, a legally stipulated obligation.

He stated during the workshop that while open discussions are not uncommon in the Kingdom, "people need to listen more closely to [other's] speeches ... and not think only of their own statements."

At a round-table discussion Monday, which tackled the future of political parties, participants debated possibilities such as raising private sector donations to resolve financial problems, establishing regular workshops on a semi-annual basis to review and discuss progress, reducing the number of political groups in the country and introducing party newspapers as a "voice" for their work.

Regarding the potential merging of various political parties, Al-Urdun al-Jadid Research Centre (UJRC) staff member Taleb Awad stated that three centrist parties have just announced their cooperation under the auspices of the Progress and Justice Party's Secretary-General Ali Al-Sa'ad.

"This workshop," Dr. Awad stated, "was the basis for a more in-depth analysis of specific problems."

The foundation is currently working on a two-day national conference on parliamentary candidates' feminist platforms, gathering women from Irbid, Kerak, Zarqa and Ajlun together with leaders of present political parties to discuss women's roles and participation in political life.

The conference is scheduled to take place in September of 1997.

Doctors launch non-governmental body to extend help to the blind

By Tanya Hubjoug
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The good deeds of the Paris-based non-governmental organisation, Médecins Sans Frontières, were inspiration to a Jordanian doctor to rally his colleagues in helping a less fortunate segment of society.

Nayef Fayed and Suhail Abdul Kader noticed an insufficiency in care for the blind in Jordan and together formed the Cultural Forum for Blind Women (CFBW), a programme which has now opened its doors and is offering free health care.

"There was a need for help, there were people who could not afford health care and there were no organisations aimed at helping the blind so we targeted our services to those who needed them most," said Dr. Fayed, medical chief of the CFBW.

The CFBW was formed in December 1995, and has since brought together 60

physicians from different specialties who have all agreed to offer their services free-of-charge to the blind, volunteering time on their days off.

"This week the group has implemented special medical cards issued through our organisation which entitle blind people to free medical examinations, surgery, and prescriptions from participating physicians," Dr. Fayed told the Jordan Times.

The CFBW has also sought help from different hospitals, including discounts on X-rays and hospital stays when necessary as well as contributions primarily from the private sector, with Queen Zein Hospital offering a significant discount, he said.

"We are seeking the help of more physicians and hospitals and would appreciate whatever help anyone can offer," Dr. Fayed stated. Despite the organisation's name, help is offered to blind men and children as well,

with occasional aid to others in need.

The CFBW plans on offering help to villages in the Kingdom this spring while last month the group paid its first such visit to the village of Thuhaybeh with HRH Prince Ra'ad Ben Zeid, offering free medical examinations, advice, and medication to the villagers.

A public benefit function for the organisation will be held this Thursday at the CFBW offices, where a special flower exhibition will be opened by HRH Princess Alia Faisal.

The entire organisation is supported by volunteer services and donations. The CFBW building itself was donated by a citizen requesting anonymity.

"Any non-sighted person wishing to obtain a health card should contact the CFBW and he or she will be offered services from any of the participating physicians," Dr. Fayed concluded.

UNRWA senior official warns of possible tariffs

AMMAN (J.T.) — A senior official of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) Tuesday warned that the agency would have to resort to charging fees on educational and health services offered to Palestinian refugees, should donor nations fail to meet the estimated \$60 million deficit in the agency's 1997 fiscal budget.

In a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, UNRWA Operations Director Robert Hopkins said that he hoped that an upcoming conference to secure donations would cover the issue.

The conference is slated to open Thursday in New York and comes on the fringes of the current U.N.

General Assembly session.

"We also hope that next week's emergency meeting in Amman to discuss UNRWA's 1997 fiscal budget will be fruitful and help the agency meet its obligations in Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the occupied territories," Mr. Hopkins said.

Donor nations and the Arab countries which host refugees will take part in the conference.

"The \$60 million deficit gives the UNRWA a new challenge in meeting its social, educational and health obligations and, unless donations are forthcoming, the agency will be forced to revise its current refugee services and impose fees on its beneficiaries," he added.

"We trust in the good intentions of the global community but we demand that they provide us with the funds which enable us to carry out our mission to the refugee community until their situation has been resolved," Mr. Hopkins said.

The donor nations had convened in Amman last September to meet with Commissioner General Peter Hansen who appealed for increased contributions, saying that, barring the availability of increased funds, the UNRWA would incur a \$60 million deficit next year.

Mr. Hansen also appealed to wealthy Arab states to extend a hand to the agency.

Police search for clues in brutal murder

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Police Tuesday were investigating the brutal murder of a 48-year-old resident of the Sahab district of Amman, who had been reported missing for five days. His deteriorating body was found in a deserted apartment in the Hashmi Shamali district, an official source confirmed.

Mohammad Ahmad Mahameh was last seen Friday in Sahab while driving his car, the source said.

The victim's abandoned Mercedes was found by authorities Sunday in the Hashmi Shamali area, he added. After combing the area, police detected an odd smell emitting from a building in Hashmi Shamali, the source stated.

Mr. Mahameh was found with his hands and legs

bound and his head crushed by a large rock, found near his body," the source said.

He stated that the victim's body was transferred to the National Institute of Forensic Medicine to undergo a post-mortem examination. Police are investigating the incident.

Also Tuesday in the Quesmeh area, a newly married couple suffocated to death in their bathroom from oxygen deprivation, according to Civil Defence Department (CDD) reports.

Omar S., 28, and his wife, Khitam, 26, married for six months, were taking a shower with the door closed and the bathroom furnace activated.

"The furnace consumed the available oxygen, in addition to the steam, which caused the couple to suffocate," a CDD official told the Jordan Times.

In December of 1994, also in the Quesmeh area, a couple died in their bathroom after a portable gas heater malfunctioned and began to emit lethal doses of gas.

In Zarqa Tuesday morning, a two-month old girl from Jabal Akhdar died when a fire raged through the room in which she was sleeping, CDD officials said.

The body of Bushra Jamal Hassan was covered with third-degree burns and she was declared dead on arrival, CDD reports said.

A CDD official told the Jordan Times Tuesday that the child's family had left the gas heater near the furniture where the infant was sleeping.

"The strong heat emitting from the heater set the furniture on fire and the blaze spread through the room," the CDD official said.

Criminal laboratory tests are introduced in Udwan Mills case

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Criminal laboratory tests are providing fresh evidence in the so-called "Udwan Mills" case, in which five people face the death penalty for allegedly murdering five others as well as committing a series of other crimes.

A total of 10 defendants, including two women, received Criminal Court prison sentences in May of 1995, ranging from 10 years to the death penalty, for committing a total of 230 crimes, including murder, armed robbery, theft, kidnapping and fraud.

They are being retried at the Criminal Court after the Court of Cassation, which had been reviewing the case for 10 months, ordered a retrial in April, stating that the Criminal Court relied exclusively on the defendant's own confessions rather than introducing material evidence.

Based on the Court of Cassation's request, the Criminal Court decided to examine hair samples in October, taken from the hands of victim Emil Khashram, to determine whether or not the hair matched that of defendants

Imad and Yousef Ayed Smadi.

The hair samples were determined as non-identical to that of the suspects, Defence Attorney Jalal Abbasi told the Jordan Times.

The two men, along with Khader Mubarak, were accused of robbing and killing Mr. Khashram, 70, in his Shmeisani home on Nov. 22, 1992.

According to the court, the three monitored the victim's home for a week and resolved to rob the house, believing the owner to have left. However Mr. Khashram was still in the house and subsequent to a struggle, they struck him to death with an iron bar while he pleaded for clemency.

During the court session, Criminal Prosecutor Ali Abu Hjeleh asked the court to summon a criminal lab expert to perform tests "to clarify some matters and to ensure justice."

Mr. Abbasi objected to Mr. Abu Hjeleh's request, however his objection was overruled and the decision was made to call an expert to testify for the prosecution.

The court tribunal, comprised of Justices Abdul Rahman Tawfiq, Mifleh Mbeideen, and Ismael Hmouz, postponed the case for Dec. 22 to hear the criminal lab expert.

Breast cancer researchers, both at home and abroad, search for cure

By Nadia Mukhlis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Breast cancer is still regarded as one of the most terrifying diseases to globally affect women and on a national level 500 new cases are diagnosed annually in the Kingdom.

Breast cancer has no respect for youth, it can strike anytime, remains fatal and progress in preventing and treating it seems agonisingly slow. Executive Director of the National Alliance of Breast Cancer Organisations Amy Langer explains, adding that a woman's best weapon against breast cancer is early detection.

For two decades, doctors have been prescribing self-examination as a form of preventive treatment, providing posters and pamphlets to promote the practice while advising women over 50 years to schedule routine mammograms.

A mammogram is an X-ray of the mammary glands directed towards early detection of tumorous masses.

Different studies were made in America and Europe to study the causes, effects and possible cures of the disease.

The American National Cancer Institute estimates that one out of every eight women will develop breast cancer over her lifetime and also predicts a 1.5 million additional cases by the year 2000 in the United States alone.

Breast cancer can occur in up to 30 per cent of women and unfortunately research has not yet found any direct cause for the disease and most of the known risk factors are components over which women have little

control.

A 1992 National American Cancer Institute Surveillance Programme study determined eight major risk factors, the most prominent being a family history of breast cancer.

Researchers at Brigham Women's Hospital in Boston concluded that women whose mothers developed breast cancer before the age of 40 were twice as likely to suffer from the disease themselves and scientists have identified a gene whose mutation may indicate a proclivity to the disease and may well be responsible for fifty per cent of hereditary breast cancer cases.

According to the study, women who have had a prior occurrence of breast cancer have a 5-6 times greater risk of developing a second mass as compared to those who have not ever suffered from the disease.

A woman with atypical hyperplasia (excessive cell growth in breast tissue) may also be 4-7 times more likely to develop breast cancer, the study maintained, however the woman runs an increased risk only if she is diagnosed through biopsies (the examination of an incised tissue sample) and found to have cell abnormalities.

Menstruation before the age of 12 elevates one's risk one and a half times that of those who begin their cycles after the age of 15 as the early oestrogen circulation has been proven to fuel the growth of half of all breast cancers and the longer breast tissue has been exposed to oestrogenic circulation, the greater the risk will be, the study stated.

Taking extra oestrogen in

the form of artificial hormones, both in oral contraceptives and post-menopausal hormone-replacement therapies theoretically could accelerate the process.

Researchers also found that environmental pollutants and chiefly pesticides produce oestrogenic effects in the body and that, over time, residues of these toxins can collect in fatty breast tissue, increasing breast cancer risk.

Another more recent finding is that the delaying of child birth until the late 30's and early 40's may increase a woman's risk of breast cancer and, according to the American Journal of the National Cancer Institute (AJNCI), women who have undergone abortion procedures run a slightly higher chance of developing breast cancer than those who carry their pregnancies to term.

Certain experts rate the risk of an obese woman as twice that of a woman of average weight (obesity is defined as weighing 20 per cent more than what doctors recognise as one's ideal weight), especially subsequent to menopause, the theory being that as obese women actually have a greater number of fat cells and as oestrogen is produced in fat cells, obese women have higher circulating levels of oestrogen.

Too much dietary fat has also proved to be a culprit in amplifying oestrogen levels in the body, although Harvard School of Public Health researchers have produced data indicating that generous amounts of olive oil may have a preventive effect, however since any oil is one hundred per cent fat they suggest utilising it in conjunction

with a low-fat diet.

The AJNCI study also indicated that alcohol consumption raises select hormone levels in the body, among which is counted oestrogen.

Despite conflicting data, breast cancer is still indisputably a leading cause of death in women and half a million new cases are diagnosed annually resulting in the deaths of approximately 250,000 women each year.

Early detection may spare lives, and thus there is a need for cancer centres to provide educational material, personal examinations and mammography screenings.

Counselling is another facet of treatment and, according to Susan Love, a surgeon who directs the Breast Centre at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), once a tumorous mass is detected a painful dilemma ensues as to whether or not one should have a mastectomy (a operation in which the entire breast is removed) or a lumpectomy (in which only the cancerous mass is removed).

Dr. Love states that upon a diagnosis of cancer, an initial reaction is often shock, but after the patient is given time to explore her options, most women ultimately content with their final decisions; they go through with their treatments and resume their lives.

Jordan is one of the Arab countries most aware of the dangers of breast cancer.

The Rotary Club of Amman is initiating a "Breast Cancer Awareness Project" (BCAP) whose aim is to stimulate early detection.

It is estimated that 500

new cases are annually diagnosed in Jordan where health centres have witnessed a rise in the incidence of breast cancer.

However, currently there is no breast screening program.

Dr. Nawar Faris, radiologist and chairperson of the Jordanian Walk-a-thon Organisation Committee, gives lectures for women, societies and schools to educate women about breast cancer, self-examination and early detection.

He distributes films, videos, educational materials and brochures around the Kingdom.

In a study done of the Kingdom this year, 208 cases of breast cancer were reported with women between the age of 45 and 54 suffering the highest incidences.

Two of the breast cancer cases were detected in men.

The BCAP is organising a 10-kilometre marathon for Dec. 17 to appeal for donations from local institutes or persons in order to buy three necessary mobile mammography machines to serve different parts of Jordan. The machines will be supervised by the Rotary club in coordination with the Ministry of Health and Al Amal Cancer Centre which is slated to begin operations this year.

Their long-term aim is to be able to better detect breast cancer in its early stages so that a more potent cure may be effected and because early detection determines an average of a five-year longer survival rate thereby less costly to families and the community.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL

* "Vieille Canaille" at the Cinema Philadelphia at 8:30 p.m.

FILM

* "Sparrow" at the British Council, Jabal Amman at 6:00 p.m.

CHARITY BAZAAR

* Annual charity bazaar by the Promise Welfare Party at the InterContinental Hotel, Jabal Amman (11:00 a.m. — 5:00 p.m.)

CHRISTMAS SHOW

* "Special show and sale of Christmas crafts at the Jordan Crafts Centre (Alaydi), Jabal Amman, Second Circle (Tel. 644555), until Dec. 31.

CHRISTMAS CHOIR

* Performance by the Amman Community Choir Band of the Young Women's Christian Association at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m. (Tel. 641119).

SEMINAR

* Seminar on the "Restrains of Party Action and Participation" and "Standards of Party Politics Effectiveness" by Dr. Mazen Gharaybeh and Dr. Nizam Barakat at the Islamic Action Front headquarters at 6:00 p.m.

LECTURES

* "Petra: Attempting to Institutionalize the Prevention of its Cultural Heritage" by Dr. Helge Fischer at Goethe Institut at 6:30 p.m.
* "The Contemporary Islamic Art and its Relationship with Universal Art" by Her Royal Highness Princess Wijdan Ali at the Royal Cultural Centre at 6:00 p.m.

OBITUARY

Prof. Mohammad Abdus Salam, Nobel Laureate in Physics

The Higher Council for Science and Technology and the scientific community in Jordan grieve with the international scientific community and the humanity at large the irreparable loss of a unique scientist and the indisputable champion of the cause of development of science and technology in the Third World, Professor Mohammad Abdus Salam, Nobel laureate of Physics and one of the scientific giants of our time.

Professor Salam was born in Thang, Panjab in 1926 and received his education at Panjab University, Lahore and St. John's College, Cambridge. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics (together with Steven Weinberg and Sheldon Lee Glashow, both at Lyman Laboratory, Harvard University) in recognition of outstanding research in the theory of the grand unification of the fundamental forces of nature. His contribution to theoretical physics was recognised throughout the world, and all kinds of honours and tributes were lavished upon him by the world's top scientific organisations and academic institutions.

After the Nobel Prize he devoted his life largely to promoting the use of science for peace and to developing basic scientific research in Third World countries. He was the founder president, and later Honorary President for life, of such pioneering institutions as the Third World Academy of Sciences, and the Third World Network of Scientific Organisations. Among his numerous towering achievements in science and technology, his contributions towards Peace and Promotion of International Scientific Collaboration, and Peace and International Understanding are perhaps the most enduring.

For the past thirty-five years or so he was commuting between the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, where he was Professor of Theoretical Physics, and the International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Trieste, which he founded in 1962 and soon flourished and bloomed under his inspired leadership to become one of the finest scientific centres in the world. As part of his vision to develop science and technology in the Arab World, he was both the inspiration and the driving force behind the establishment of the Petra School of Physics in Jordan, which has aimed at disseminating advanced physics at an international level as well as activating scientific research in Jordan — a country which he loved most warmly and admired.

In his passing away the world has lost a great scientist and the region a great friend and support. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

Milosevic under international pressure as protests continue

BELGRADE (AFP) — Serbian protestors geared up for another day of mass demonstrations Tuesday as President Slobodan Milosevic came under mounting pressure from the international community.

With rallies over the cancellation of key elections results set to enter their 15th day, Western leaders have warned the Serbian president not to use force against the demonstrators saying a violent confrontation would deepen Belgrade's isolation from the world community.

"The United States would be outraged if any attempt was made to use force against the demonstrators," U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Monday.

"The Serbian government stole the election and should be held accountable for that," he said, adding that Washington reserved "the right to take any action to express our discontent with the Serbian government."

The European Union's (EU) official in Bosnia, Carl

Bildt, added to the warning, saying that, "if the authorities were now to try and stop the protests through violence or the threat of violence, it would dramatically increase the distance between the regime in Belgrade and the international community."

The EU's Irish presidency, meanwhile, said it was "gravely concerned" by events in Serbia and said that Belgrade's compliance with "democratic norms" was a key factor in determining its future relations with the European Union.

The demonstrations, which were due to begin again at 2 p.m. Tuesday, were launched after the government cancelled the results of municipal elections in which the opposition claimed victory in 15 of Serbia's 13 largest towns, including the capital Belgrade.

Authorities organised a re-run in which the opposition, despite boycotting the vote, still maintained its hold on seven municipalities.

The authorities broke their silence on the crisis Sunday, warning they would not tolerate any violence and denouncing protestors as neo-fascists.

Security forces have since arrested 32 people in connection with the demonstrations and armoured vehicles appeared on the streets for the first time Monday.

Mr. Milosevic himself has yet to comment on the events.

Washington, which has already opted for a policy of withholding diplomatic recognition and isolating the Belgrade regime, is lobbying European governments to hold off giving rump Yugoslavia preferential trade treatment in an attempt to put pressure on the regime.

"We are working intensively with the Europeans to have them respond to this," a State Department official said.

EU foreign ministers last month decided to delay until Dec. 6 implementation of a plan to grant rump Yugoslavia trade privileges,

a move that would follow the EU decision earlier this year to grant diplomatic recognition to Belgrade.

Under the plan, Serbia and Montenegro, which comprise federal Yugoslavia, would be granted customs waivers on a certain percentage of exports.

Western warnings on the use of violence came against a background of past bloody confrontation between Mr. Milosevic and the opposition.

In March 1991, some 100,000 demonstrators gathered in Belgrade to protest against state control of the press. Police charged the crowd and two people were killed and 77 injured in the ensuing chaos.

NATO was also among those to criticise the regime Monday, saying the situation was causing concern and calling for any recourse to violence to be avoided. France, meanwhile, denounced the arrest of the 10 opposition militants, saying they "were not conducive to calming the situation."



Students protesting against the Socialist government's annulling of an opposition victory in local elections march in the centre of Belgrade Monday. Thousands of students marched through the city on a day of heavy snowfall, ignoring the warning by Belgrade police to Serbia's opposition against the staging of further street demonstrations (Reuters photo)

Bosnian Serb refugees ethnically cleanse Muslims

SARAJEVO (AFP) — The United Nations has demanded that the Bosnian Serbs halt a campaign of ethnic cleansing of Muslims living in Serb-held territory, a U.N. spokesman said Tuesday.

Spokesman Alex Ivanko said more than 30 Muslim families had been evicted from their homes in the northern village of Dubrava by Serbs who are themselves refugees from Muslim-controlled territory.

"The evictions are being conducted by Serb displaced persons from central Bosnia, specifically from Dojci Vakuf," said Mr. Ivanko. "The local authorities implicitly are supporting these evictions and are not doing anything to stop them."

He said several more families had told U.N. police stationed in the nearby town of Bosanska Gradiska that they were too frightened of the Serbs to stay.

"We do believe it is outrageous that one year after Dayton we can see minori-

ties being thrown out of their homes," Mr. Ivanko said. "We demand that it should stop."

The Dayton Peace Agreement signed in November 1995 committed Bosnia's Serbs, Croats and Muslims to stop their war and allow refugees to return to their homes in one another's territory.

But throughout this year the U.N. police and U.N. relief officials have reported continued attacks on ethnic communities, mostly in Serb-held areas.

In June Muslim villagers were attacked by Serb paramilitaries in the town of Teslic and forced to flee their homes, said the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees.

On Monday the U.N. reported that 60 Muslims had been evicted from their homes by Croats in Croat-held parts of the southern city of Mostar. In one case armed men broke down the door of a crippled woman's apartment, dragged her into the street and left her there.

Ethnic Serbs returning to Muslim-controlled Sarajevo have also been attacked and evicted, U.N. officials say.

Meanwhile, an international monitoring agency said Tuesday Western troops must seek out indicted war criminals in Bosnia as a key step to securing a lasting peace.

Without such urgent measures Bosnia faces renewed war, the International Crisis Group (ICG), a private monitoring commission with broad international membership, said in a report prepared for a major London conference to review the peace.

"The conflict has by no means been resolved and may spill over into bloodshed again," said the report. It pointed to the failure of peace provisions designed to remove ethnic barriers as the basis for its pessimism.

Foreign ministers from Europe, North America and Russia met in Britain Wednesday and Thursday to assess progress in former Yugoslavia. They were not expected to go beyond urg-

ing all sides to reaffirm their commitment to previous accords.

The ICG twinned its gloomy assessment of Bosnia's prospects for peace with a call for practical steps to salvage the November 1995 Dayton accords that ended 43 months of war.

First on its list was a call to NATO's governing council to order the thousands of alliance troops in Bosnia to actively seek out the dozens of indicted war criminals still at large.

Led by the United States, the 50,000-strong peace force, soon to be cut to 30,000, has shied from the risky task of capturing wanted men, fearing casualties that will be unpopular and politically costly at home.

"There cannot be reconciliation without accountability," said Hrair Balian, director of ICG's Bosnia operation. Only seven out of 74 indicted have been captured so far and world enthusiasm for the war crimes process has appeared to wane.

Poll: Most Australians would vote for republic

SYDNEY (R) — Australia would become a republic, cutting its ties with Britain, if a referendum on the issue was held now, according to an opinion poll published Tuesday.

The poll, which was conducted last weekend, found backing for a republic had increased under Australia's conservative liberal-national government, despite pro-monarchy comments by Prime Minister John Howard.

Australia, once a British Penal colony, is currently a Commonwealth of states with a constitutional monarchy — Britain's Queen Elizabeth — as head of state.

The poll, published in the Sydney Morning Herald newspaper, found a referendum on Australia becoming a republic would win the support of a majority of voters in a majority of the states.

This result would meet the constitutional requirements for such a change. Referenda are traditionally defeated in Australia because of the requirement to have the support of the majority of voters in the majority of states.

"In a marked turnaround, attributed in part to the departure of the former (Labour) Prime Minister Mr. Paul Keating, all states except Tasmania now have majority Republican support," the newspaper said.

Mr. Keating, whose Labour Party was defeated in the March 2 election, frequently had stated his belief that Australia should cut ties with Britain's monarchy to become a republic.

The poll found support for a republic among liberal voters had increased markedly and was only partially offset by a decline in Labor voter support.

Mr. Howard said Monday that he was still committed to having a vote on the issue by the end of the century.

Peru reportedly buys fighter jets from Belarus

LIMA, Peru (R) — The Peruvian government has purchased 14 Sukhoi-25 fighter jets from Belarus, in addition to its recent acquisition of 18 MiG-29s, air force sources said Monday.

The sources told Reuters the planes were bought from the former Soviet state of Belarus for an undisclosed price and were currently being held at an air force base in the southern city of Arequipa.

"The MiGs and the Sukhois complement each other ideally, the former for rapid manoeuvres and re-

pellent attacks, the latter for low-flying," said one of the sources, who asked not to be named.

Official military spokesmen said they could neither confirm nor deny the information.

President Alberto Fujimori recently confirmed the purchase of an undisclosed number of MiG fighters, but refused to give more details. In a television interview Sunday, he promised to disclose full details of the government's recent arms purchases when the moment was appropriate.

OSCE sees Chechen rebels keen to hold fair elections

MOSCOW (R) — The chief European negotiator in Chechnya said Monday he was confident that separatist leaders wanted free and fair elections in Russia's breakaway province next January.

Tim Guldinmann, who heads the mission of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Chechnya, said the polls called to elect regional leader and parliament were crucial for a lasting peace in the region.

"Holding the polls is a central issue in the Chechnya peace process," Mr. Guldinmann told a news conference. "I believe that the Chechen leaders have a political will to organise democratic, free and fair elections."

The separatist leaders, who appear to be in full control of Chechnya since Moscow started pulling out its forces from the region under a peace deal struck on Aug. 31, have called the polls for Jan. 27 in a clear attempt to formalise their rule.

Under the peace deal, which halted Moscow's 21-month-long bid to crush Chechnya's independence bid by force, Russia agreed with the rebels to delay a decision on the region's final political status for five years.

Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and rebel Premier Aslan Maskhadov signed an agreement last month to map out relations between Moscow and the separatists until the local elections.

Mr. Guldinmann, who spoke in the office of Interfax news agency, praised Moscow for changing its

policy in Chechnya and specifically for its decision, made by President Boris Yeltsin last week, to pull out all Russian forces from Chechnya.

"I feel there has been a constructive approach on the Russian side over the last weeks or even months," said the Swiss diplomat who had been critical of Moscow's military intervention in Chechnya, which cost tens of thousands of lives.

Despite the deal Russia and the rebels have little in common in their vision of the region's future.

The rebel leaders, inspired by their military success, say they will accept nothing short of full independence.

However Russia has ruled out granting independence to Chechnya and says the whole problem may be solved by offering a good deal to the region.

"The positive thing now is that the Russian leadership made clear it respects the views of the Chechen leaders," said Mr. Guldinmann. "Respecting others' views does not at all mean accepting them," he added.

Mr. Guldinmann said the OSCE and European countries had so far treated Chechnya as part of the Russian federation and added there were no immediate reasons to change this view.

"We view the polls as elections in one of the parts of the Russian federation," he said.

Mr. Guldinmann said he had seen laws adopted by rebel Chechnya to hold the elections but had not had an opportunity to study them in depth.

Mine blast in China kills 114

BEIJING (AFP) — A gas explosion ripped through a coal mine in northern China killing at least 114 workers in one of the country's worst mining disasters, reports said.

The explosion set off a raging inferno in the main shafts of Dongcun mine in the suburbs of Datong, a major industrial city in the coal-producing province of Shanxi. News of the disaster, which happened last Wednesday, only reached Beijing Tuesday.

A journalist with the Shanxi daily who visited the accident site told AFP: "The heat was so intense after the explosion that many bodies might have completely vaporised."

He said the death toll had risen to at least 114 from the official figure of 91 reported by the Sunday edition of the Shanxi daily.

None of the reports specified how many were underground at the time of the blast, while investigations

into the precise cause of the gas explosion were still underway.

The mine, which was owned by the district government and produced 530,000 tonnes of coal a year, employed more than 300 miners — most of them itinerant workers.

An official at the mine, who estimated the death toll at around 100, said the number of temporary employees made it impossible to confirm how many had been working when the explosion occurred.

Vice Minister of Coal Wang Xianzhong and senior officials from the labour ministry, have visited the scene of the accident, the daily said.

A gas explosion in a coal mine in Central Henan province in May killed 84 workers, while two land-slides in a gold mine in the southwestern province of Yunnan in early June left 227 dead or missing.

Last year, China witnessed 529 major mining

accidents — those involving more than three deaths.

The death toll of 3,362 was an increase of 8.3 per cent on 1994, but the real figure could be much higher according to a labour ministry report in July that said "some mine owners even tried to hide accidents from the authorities."

The report blamed the rise in accidents on a flouting of security procedures and a lack of government action against illegal mines.

Meanwhile, on the same day as the Datong mine explosion, a blast at a fireworks factory in the central province of Hunan killed 14 workers and left 11 seriously injured, the legal daily reported Tuesday.

The two workshops that made up the factory had been completely destroyed by the explosion, the newspaper said, adding that the owner of the factory, Dong Xinhua, had been placed under house arrest, pending an investigation.

Mexican attorney general fired

MEXICO CITY (R) — Mexico's President Ernesto Zedillo fired his attorney general Monday after a series of failures in high-profile assassination cases.

Antonio Lozano Gracia, 43, the only opposition member of the cabinet, will be replaced by Jorge Madrazo Cuellar, a political independent who heads the government's human rights commission. Zedillo's office said in a statement.

The statement did not say why Lozano was fired, but a senior government official, speaking off the record, told Reuters "sheer incompetence" was the reason.

"There have been many instances in which Lozano did not provide the results he was asked to," the official said. "He created enormous expectations but did not live up to them."

Interior Minister Emilio Chuayffert said Madrazo, a respected lawyer who has spoken out against irregularities by ruling party officials, will be given the same freedom as Lozano to pursue investigations.

Madrazo pledged to clean up the attorney general's office and said he would not allow politics to interfere with the law. He also promised to step up the fight

against trafficking in illegal drugs, most of which is funnelled to the United States.

"My actions will always be guided by two principles in which I believe wholeheartedly: Truth and the law," Madrazo told a news conference.

Zedillo vowed to impose the rule of law on Mexico, where the rich and powerful have long been seen as immune from prosecution for anything from tax fraud to murder.

After taking office in December 1994, Zedillo appointed Lozano, a federal deputy and parliamentary leader for the conservative National Action Party (PAN), as the first-ever opposition politician to serve at cabinet level.

In a news conference late Monday the PAN's national leadership said Mexicans "have a right to know the precise reasons for (Lozano's) removal."

"In our opinion, Mr. Lozano Gracia performed his job with loyalty and capacity, always putting the national interest ahead of any personal or partisan interest," the PAN's national executive committee said in a statement issued after a 2 1/2-hour closed-door meeting.

As attorney general, Lo-

zano was charged with investigating two highly sensitive 1994 murder cases, both involving the killing of top ruling party politicians. He failed to solve either case.

His prosecutors said presidential candidate Luis Donaldo Colosio was murdered in a conspiracy but saw their cases against several suspects collapse in court. That investigation is now on its fourth special prosecutor with no visible results except the imprisonment of one confessed gunman.

In the other big murder case, that of ruling party Secretary-General Jose Francisco Ruiz Massieu, Lozano's office blundered again and again, government officials said.

Zedillo allowed the arrest in March 1995 of former President Carlos Salinas's brother Raul on charges of conspiracy to murder Ruiz Massieu — but Lozano's office has failed to provide hard evidence to secure a conviction.

In October Lozano's team leaked tips to reporters of a major find in the case, then presented them with a skeleton dug up in the garden of a ranch used by Raul Salinas.

Agencies launch \$133m Afghanistan aid appeal

KABUL (R) — International aid organisations launched an appeal Tuesday to raise \$133 million for emergency humanitarian and rehabilitation needs in Afghanistan.

"Much of the momentum to meet the complex challenges in Afghanistan comes from the Afghans themselves," the appeal document said. "The international community is asked to assist them in their struggle."

"In 1997, assistance will help to rebuild the foundation for a longer-lasting peace by bringing communities together and strengthening their capacity to govern their lives again," it said.

The \$133 million represented 50 cents a month per Afghan, the document said. "It could make a huge difference," it said.

The appeal is an inter-agency effort comprising the United Nations and non-governmental organisations in Afghanistan.

Most funds raised by the appeal would go towards providing basic relief.

"The focus of the appeal is to meet the urgent humanitarian and rehabilitation needs of Afghanistan," the U.N. said.

According to the appeal document, the funds will be used for "nation-wide programmes that respond to immediate needs across Afghanistan, including basic relief activities, mine clearance, assistance to the disabled, repatriation, immunisation and narcotics control."

Response to previous aid appeals for Afghanistan have been disappointing. An appeal for \$124 million in 1995/96 raised just \$56 million.

"Without a generous response to the appeal we will see a much worse problem here. We don't want another Rwanda to develop before we react," said one aid worker in the capital Kabul.

After 17 years of war, Afghanistan is among the world's most needy countries.

"By any international comparison, the scale of need in Afghanistan is daunting," the appeal document said.

"More landmines are buried in Afghanistan than in any other country in the world. Up to 10 million mines remain to be cleared. As many as 10 Afghans fall victim to mines daily," it said.

"Afghanistan has the highest rate of infant, childhood and maternal mortality in Asia," it says.

A recent survey estimated that one child in four dies before its fifth birthday.

The U.N. says it feeds half of Kabul's population — some 600,000 people.

"The World Food Programme (WFP) is helping almost 300,000 beneficiaries, and other agencies are feeding a similar number. Half of the city is receiving food support from the international community," said Ismael Omer of WFP in Kabul.

Aid workers in Kabul privately express concern that the policies of the purist Islamic Taliban, particularly their treatment of women, will make it more difficult to raise funds from donor nations.

In the 75 per cent of the country under Taliban control, girls' schools have been closed and women banned from the workplace.

The appeal said that programmes funded from the appeal will be monitored to ensure that they do not conflict with international standards of human rights.

A number of non-governmental organisations have already suspended their programmes in protest at the Taliban's policies concerning women.



Rakesh Kumar, who was injured in a train bomb blast with his wife and son, rests at Ambala city hospital. At least 12 passengers were killed and 37 injured after a bomb blast in an Indian passenger train (Reuters photo)

India steps up security after deadly bomb blast

AMBALA, India (R) — Indian authorities tightened security Tuesday after a bomb on a train killed 12 people and wounded 37 in a deadly blast in the Punjab region.

Twelve passengers were killed and 37 injured early Monday by the explosion, which shattered a sleeper coach at Ambala Cantonment Station near Chandigarh, capital of the northern state of Punjab.

Police said Tuesday that they had issued a "red alert", ordering officers to step up surveillance of all vehicles, trains and buses in the Punjab region, which for a decade until the early 1990s was torn by a violent separatist rebellion.

Police were also told to

increase sweeps on hideouts of suspected Sikh militants, a senior officer told Reuters in Chandigarh.

No one claimed responsibility for the blast, which was the deadliest attack on a train in the region since Sikh militants stopped a train near Ludhiana city in late 1991 and slaughtered at least 53 passengers, mostly Hindus.

Police intelligence officials told Reuters they recently circulated a warning that Sikh militants had crossed into Punjab state from neighbouring Pakistan and were preparing to launch an attack in early December.

"They want to create law and order problems in the northern states," said an official with Punjab police

intelligence who asked not to be identified.

At least 20,000 people were killed during the Sikh revolt which rocked Punjab state for a decade but largely dissipated following local assembly elections in early 1992.

Neighbouring Jammu and Kashmir state has been racked by a Muslim separatist rebellion which erupted in 1990. More than 20,000 people have died in that insurgency.

Monday's bomb blast fanned fears of a resurgence of violence ahead of state assembly polls in Punjab due by mid-February. The dates have not yet been announced.

Officials from the federal home ministry convened an emergency meeting with

police from Punjab and Haryana states in Chandigarh Tuesday morning to review the security situation, authorities said.

Ambala police Chief Rajbir Singh Deswal told Reuters it appeared sophisticated RDX explosive was used in Monday's blast.

"Clinical evidence indicates that RDX was used in the train blast," Chief Deswal told Reuters. "We shall conclusively prove it once we get the official report from forensic science experts later this afternoon."

Police said that in the past, Sikh militant groups have generally been quick to claim responsibility for attacks. They speculated that Monday's blast may have been carried out by guerrillas new to the area.

China proposes closer ties with South Asia

ISLAMABAD (R) — Chinese President Jiang Zemin proposed a plan Monday to improve ties with South Asian neighbours and disclaimed any ambitions for regional dominance.

"China will never seek hegemony for itself," he told Pakistan's senate (upper house) on the second day of a four-day visit to a long-standing regional ally.

"China stands ready to live harmoniously. On the basis of the five principles of peaceful coexistence," he said.

Mr. Jiang proposed that China and South Asian nations broaden exchanges and deepen traditional friendship, respect each other as equals,

promote mutual benefit and common development, properly handle existing disputes and work together towards a better future.

"We are ready to join hands with the South Asian countries in building a friendly and good-neighbourly relationship that is long-term, stable and oriented towards the 21st century."

"We should look at the differences or disputes from a long-term perspective, seeking a just and reasonable settlement through consultations and negotiations while bearing in mind the larger picture," he said.

"If certain issues cannot be resolved for the time

being, they may be shelved temporarily so that they will not affect the normal state-to-state relations."

Mr. Jiang did not refer to any specific problem, but may have had in mind China's border dispute with India. He signed an agreement aimed at reducing border tension during his visit to India last week, the first by a Chinese president.

He made no reference to Pakistan's long-standing quarrel with India over the Himalayan region of Kashmir, which Islamabad says is the main source of instability in South Asia.

Mr. Jiang said China sincerely hoped that the region

would enjoy long-term stability and vigorous economic development.

"China will, as always, support South Asian regional cooperation, support the proposal and initiative for the establishment of a South Asia nuclear-free zone and Indian Ocean zone of peace, and support all efforts designed to serve peace, stability and development of the South Asian region."

Mr. Jiang said that while the world was undergoing what he called structural transition, "it is necessary for our two sides to step up consultation, cooperate closely and come to each other's support in international affairs."

Leading suspect in Japan subway attack captured

TOKYO (R) — A leading suspect in the nerve gas attack on Tokyo subways last year was arrested in the southern Japanese prefecture of Okinawa Tuesday, police said.

Yasuo Hayashi was arrested on murder and attempted murder charges for his alleged role in the March 1995 gas attack on the subway system and a June 1994 attack in a central Japanese resort city, a police spokesman said.

Mr. Hayashi, 38, whose face appears on thousands of posters as one of Japan's most wanted fugitives, had eluded a police manhunt for 21 months, moving around the Tokyo area and through-out Japan, according to me-

dia reports of sporadic sightings.

He has been identified by other members of the Aum Shinri Kyo (Supreme Truth Sect) as one of the cultists who released sarin nerve gas in rush hour Tokyo subways, killing 12 people and injuring thousands.

The cultists have also said he carried out a sarin gas attack in central Matsumoto in June 1994 that killed seven people and other crimes attributed to the Doomsday cult.

"I'm tired now," police quoted him as saying when he was detained on the tiny island of Ishigaki, located 1,600 kilometres southwest of Tokyo. Arrested with him was Hideko Obora, who is

accused of sheltering him in her Kyoto apartment.

Two other cultists suspected of spreading sarin in the Tokyo subways, a man and a woman, remain at large.

Mr. Hayashi served in the "special force" of Aum Shinri Kyo founder Shoko Asahara, who is on trial for murder for allegedly planning the attack. In his role as Asahara's top henchman, he visited North Korea and made weapons buying trips to Russia, media reports have said.

Mr. Hayashi is also suspected of being involved in the shooting of national police agency Chief Takaji Kunimatsu in March 1995, the Japanese media has reported.

A former police officer

and cult member who has confessed to shooting Kunimatsu told investigators that he met Hayashi after the shooting, according to media reports. The police officer was fired from the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department last week for leaking police information to the cult.

In trials that began earlier this year, five former cult officials have testified in court that Asahara instructed them to carry out the subway gas attack and other killings.

Apart from the subway murder charge, Asahara faces 16 other charges ranging from kidnapping-murders to illegal production of drugs and weapons.

Liz Taylor: income gap hinders AIDS effort

UNITED NATIONS (R) — Actress Elizabeth Taylor Monday urged the United States to take the lead in seeking an inexpensive AIDS vaccine, warning that the epidemic would not end as long as good health care was the preserve of the rich.

Addressing U.N. World AIDS Day, Ms. Taylor said a safe, effective and inexpensive vaccine was the only way to combat AIDS in the United States and abroad. The United Nations has a combined agency programme, called UNAIDS, launched last January.

"As long as there is such disparity between rich and poor there will never be a resounding solution to

AIDS," she said.

Ms. Taylor urged the U.S. government to take the initiative by bringing together top research scientists with the sole aim of finding an HIV vaccine, pointing out that only \$130 million a year was spent globally on research.

Ms. Taylor, the co-founder of the American Foundation for AIDS Research, said that despite recent optimism associated with new treatments, the disease was still spreading among women and the poor and in poor nations.

In the United States, she said there were two classes of people living with AIDS: "Those who can afford treatment and those who cannot. Is this something that we can

hear?"

She said that 90 per cent of current infections were among women and called for research into a female condom that was cheap and easy to use, or microbicides that could be used vaginally.

A recent U.N. report said that more than 3 million people, mostly under 25 years of age, have become infected with the AIDS virus in 1996.

The new cases bring to nearly 23 million the total number who are infected. Since AIDS was discovered over 15 years ago, 6.4 million people, including 1.4 million children, have died, with 1.5 million succumbing to the disease in 1996. Africa is the worst hit, with 1.4 million per-

sons or 63 per cent of the world's total currently living with AIDS.

U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali described the figures as appalling, saying no country was immune. He said at the very least countries needed "sex education programmes and awareness campaigns among intravenous drug users."

General assembly President Razali Ismail of Malaysia told the same session that in some African countries health care amounted to no more than \$10 a person a year, which meant that "the majority of those with hiv worldwide are therefore excluded from any treatment using drug therapy."

Algerian police kill 12 Islamic rebels in shoot-out

ALGIERS (AFP) — Twelve Islamic fundamentalist guerrillas responsible for the massacre of 38 civilians in October were killed in long and bloody clashes with security troops, the Algerian press reported Tuesday.

After a 15-hour stand-off, the Islamic commando, including the group's leader Ouled Abdenebi, were killed, the Liberte daily reported.

Army and police troops encircled the Ghardaia region, 400 kilometres south of Algiers, where the group was hiding out, Liberte reported.

The paper did not say whether there were any casualties among security troops.

Altogether, 38 civilians were killed in October not far from the Hassi Rmel Gasfield almost 400 kilometres south of Algiers, in one of the worst massacres since 1992.

In a frequently-used tactic,

suspected members of the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), set up a false checkpoint identical to those of the security forces on the main road between Laghouat and Ghardaia, and executed people in vehicles who drove up to it.

The bodies of the dead fundamentalists were taken back to Ghardaia, Liberte and the daily Le Matin reported.

Army troops also launched a vast anti-GIA sweep several days ago in the Sidi Moussa, Larbaa and Chrea regions, the Al Watan daily reported Tuesday.

In a separate development, Algerian authorities introduced a new bill to monitor the use of equipment considered as sensitive, including walkie-talkies, fax machines, portable and satellite telephones.

The new government bill is aimed at regulating equipment, which, if used for fraudulent purposes,

could "harm public security and order", the latest government gazette reported.

The bill was approved by President Liamine Zeroual and the Interior and Defence ministries, as well as the Ministry of Post and Telecommunications.

Meanwhile, negotiations between Algeria and the European Union (EU) on an association accord will begin in early 1997, the official news agency APS quoted EU envoy Manuel Marin as saying Monday.

Mr. Marin, the European commissioner for cooperation with south Mediterranean countries, was speaking after holding talks with President Zeroual in Algiers.

The EU envoy told reporters "negotiations with Algeria on the association accord will start at end February or the beginning of March 1997," APS said.

"If we work hard on this project, it is possible to reach an agreement in a reasonable time," he said. But

gave no date.

The envoy described his talks with President Zeroual and Algerian officials as "very instructive," APS said.

Algerian authorities were committed to achieve the political process — communal and legislative elections — as promised," he added.

Algerians voted overwhelmingly last week for Mr. Zeroual's draft constitution banning Muslim guerrillas from seeking power.

Official results from Algeria's referendum to change the country's constitution showed that 84.6 per cent voted "Yes" for change and 15.4 per cent voted "No", the constitutional council announced.

More than 60,000 people have died in Algeria's violence since 1992 when the authorities annulled a general election in which radical Islamists had taken a huge lead.

S. Africa cautious as Taiwan starts damage control

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa will not reverse its decision to switch diplomatic ties from Taiwan to China but will tell Taiwan's visiting foreign minister that it wants to preserve good ties with the island, a spokesman for President Nelson Mandela said Tuesday.

Zairean rebels tighten grip in east; Kinshasa powerless

GOMA (AFP) — Zairean rebels led by Laurent-Désiré Kabila have tightened their grip in the east as towns on the border with Rwanda and Uganda successively fall into their hands, sources said Tuesday.

Journalists and expatriate workers in Goma, Bukavu, Uvira, Beni and Butembo said the mainly Tutsi rebels had seized these towns and this week advanced on Kinshasa in the west of the eastern Kivu region and Bunia to the north.

Some reports said the rebels had taken Kisangani, a strategic town some 500 kilometres northwest of Goma, but Zairean Information Minister Boguwa Makeli denied this. Independent sources reached in the town said there was no sign of the guerrillas.

Kisangani is currently a logistic base for many humanitarian organisations seeking to assist Rwandan refugees and displaced Zaireans fleeing from the combat zone. The town has also been envisaged as a base for a multinational force to help with the relief effort.

For days, an airdrop of food to stranded refugees, believed to number some 300,000, has been under

consideration by members of the Canadian-led force in Uganda, but aid workers fear that this would be unworkable and say troops must go in to help on the ground.

A spokesman here for the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said that the rebels were still on the high Masisi Plain, 90 kilometres northwest of Goma.

They were allied with an anti-Hutu local ethnic group, the Batutsi, in battles with Rwandan Hutu Inter-hamwe militiamen and members of the Rwandan former army, aid workers said.

The armed Rwandans fled into Zaire in 1994 after being routed by the Tutsi-led Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), which won a civil war in July that year and put an end to the genocide of more than half a million people.

The gunmen were holding sway over a column of some 50,000 Rwandan Hutu refugees in the Masisi area and another group of between 150,000 and 200,000 in the nearby Walikale region.

According to Rwandan authorities, around 600,000 of the Hutus who fled to

eastern Zaire in 1994 have flooded back home since the Zairean rebels began their uprising in October.

Meanwhile, Rwandan refugees arrived at the desolate Mugunga Camp after trekking for over a month in appalling conditions to escape gunmen, saying they left scenes of death and horror among refugees still days away from here.

Victor, Jean-Marie and Innocent, three Rwandan refugees from the Katala Camp, north of Goma, spent more than a month hiding out in the forest, where they fed on grass and roots and drank water from stagnant pools.

They arrived Monday at Mugunga Camp, 15 kilometres from Goma, once the world's biggest refugee camp before its more than 400,000 occupants left to return to Rwanda.

Since it was seized by Zairean Tutsi rebels two weeks ago, Mugunga, which lies at the foot of the Nyiragongo Volcano, is nothing but a ruined shell of what it once was.

All that protrudes from the ground are bits of black volcanic rock, which were used by the refugees to fence in their fragile shelters of wood and plastic sheeting.

13 burned to death in Malaysia collision

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Thirteen Singaporeans burned to death and 12 were injured Tuesday when their tour bus rammed into a truck parked on the side of a highway near the Malaysian capital.

A police spokesman told reporters all the passengers were Singaporean nationals on their way to Gerteng Highlands, a Hilltop Casino Resort that is popular with residents in neighbouring Singapore.

A seven-year-old boy, a 10-year-old boy and a 10-year-old girl were among those killed, police said.

Both vehicles caught fire immediately after the bus slammed into the truck, which was carrying scrap metal, the spokesman said.

Sam Wei Jie, 10, who was among those injured, said his father carried him out of the flaming bus after the early morning incident.

"My father carried me out and put me on the side of the road but I can't remember what happened after that. There were flames all over the bus," he said.

The boy's mother, aunt and grandfather are believed to be among the dead, hospital officials said.

His grandmother, Lee Ah Neo, was taken to hospital with slight injuries. It was not immediately clear if the boy's father, who may have tried to rescue other members of the family, was among the survivors, hospital officials said.

The bus driver, identified as Rosni Faat, has been detained for investigation, the police spokesman said.

The truck driver, who survived without injuries, gave police a statement and was released.

The accident occurred at 4.30 a.m. local time (2030 GMT) outside the town of Nilai on the Kuala Lumpur-Seremban highway.

Burma frees most detained students

RANGOON (R) — Burma's military government said it had briefly held hundreds of students Tuesday after they staged night-long street protests in the capital Rangoon, the biggest such demonstrations in several years.

Witnesses earlier said up to 300 students were taken away just before sunrise in police trucks when they refused to disperse after a march through central Rangoon early Tuesday.

They were released after their papers were checked, a spokesman for the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) said.

"They were not detained nor did they face any charges. They were simply held

briefly to sort out whether they were real students or infiltrators," he said.

"After paper checks, they were sent back to their school and hostels because we want them to continue their peaceful studies," he told reporters after the monthly SLORC press briefing Tuesday.

Up to 2,000 students took to the streets Monday to protest against the police handling of a brawl between their colleagues and restaurant owners on Oct. 20.

The latest street protests, which began with a sit-in at the Yangon (Rangoon) Institute of Technology (YIT) Monday, were some of the worst since the 1988 pro-democracy uprising.

Thousands were killed or

imprisoned when the SLORC crushed the 1988 movement.

There were no reports of violence in the latest protests.

Those held Tuesday were part of a group of 400 who had gathered near the central Shwe Dagon Pagoda around 6.00 a.m. local time (2230 GMT) after marching from the YIT.

By the early hours of Tuesday the protest had moved to the heart of the capital. Witnesses said those detained had refused an order to disperse when cornered by police near the pagoda.

The SLORC spokesman said the genuine students had been joined by political agitators.

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Good spirit, fresh start

DESPITE THE tension that accompanied the circumstances surrounding the decision by Karak Deputy Nazih Ammarin to resign from the Lower House of Parliament, the controversy ended in a manner that reflected well on Jordan and its efforts to build a democratic system in which cooperation for the public good is the dominant feature.

Both Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and Dr. Ammarin came out winners from the dispute that erupted between them during the Aug. 16 Karak riots when the country had to deal with a difficult and challenging situation at which visions were blurred and emotions high.

The prime minister, who should be credited for having successfully absorbed the tension of the summer, proved yet again that he is a politician capable of taking difficult decisions and a statesman willing to do what it takes to achieve national reconciliation and right wrongs.

By apologising to Dr. Ammarin in the House of Parliament, Mr. Kabariti defused a potentially troublesome situation that could have developed had the resignation of the deputy went through. It has been established that Mr. Kabariti already apologised to Dr. Ammarin for his alleged threatening of the deputy during the Karak riots. On one occasion he did so in the presence of His Majesty King Hussein. But Dr. Ammarin felt that the previous apologies were not enough and wanted a public apology which he can take back to his constituency which he claimed was insulted by the prime minister. The prime minister, who enjoys a strong support in the House, could have refused to do so. The result would have been extra tension that would not, most probably, present a significant crisis for Mr. Kabariti but that would have spoiled the country's political environment which should now be marked by cooperation rather than confrontation. Mr. Kabariti chose to help turn a new page. For that, hats are off.

Dr. Ammarin too, opted for reconciliation. He acknowledged, publicly, the "chivalry" of Mr. Kabariti and praised his courage in apologising. Dr. Ammarin could have chosen to ride high on the waves of challenging the authorities among some of his colleagues and supporters. But that would have been an easy gain on the expense of helping the country's higher interests. He proved above that. For him too, hats are off.

And hats are off for the opposition in Parliament which did not exploit the tension between Mr. Kabariti and Dr. Ammarin to embarrass the government and make political gains and noises at the expense of the time and work of the House. The opposition recognised the size of the problem and the need to keep it within proportions. Its stand betrayed farsightedness and responsibility.

The handling of the resignation of Dr. Ammarin is a plus for Parliament and for the government. But above all, it is a positive precedent for the whole of Jordan. The spirit that prevailed in the House Monday must be encouraged.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

NEWS ABOUT the imminent resumption of Iraqi oil sales is warmly welcomed by Jordan which, after Iraq, will be the first beneficiary economically, said Fahed Fanek, a writer for Al Ra'i daily, Tuesday. The writer said after Iraq, Jordan was the main party to suffer economically as a result of the imposition of the U.N. sanctions on Iraq, since most of its exports used to go to the Iraqi markets. Jordan welcomes the new development and the announcement by Iraqi government officials that Baghdad will give Jordanian exporters priority over others and will resort to Aqaba port as the main source for securing imports of food and medicine which will be purchased in exchange for oil sales, said the writer. Once the operations start, the Jordanian businessmen will start selling products to the Iraqi markets in greater quantities than they are doing now and in this way the Iraqis will be settling their debts, accumulated over the past six years, to Jordan, he noted. As a clear sign of such a favourable development to the Jordanian economy, the price of industrial shares in the Amman Financial Market have recently witnessed a sharp rise, while the volume of share trading has been increasing, said the writer. He added that Iraq remains Jordan's strategic depth and a major source of income for its people.

DESPITE THE Ministry of Health's efforts to improve the health and medical situation in the Kingdom, the level of medical services in most regions, especially in the rural areas, is still below the minimum level, according to Mohammad Daoud, a writer for Al Dastour. The health authorities are not coping with the natural population growth, the increase in population, resulting from the return of expatriates, and the rising cost of medical treatment at private clinics, he said. The Health Ministry, said the writer, is facing the new challenge of allocating huge funds to cater to the medical needs of people, especially the low-income groups. Even in major cities like Amman and Zarqa the Health Ministry is finding it most difficult to cope with the increase in public demand on medical services at a time when it has no resources for opening new hospitals in the rural regions to reduce the pressure on the hospitals of the main cities, he added. The writer said that the government is urgently required to earmark sufficient funds in its 1997 budget to finance the treatment of people in the rural regions, who are most eligible for assistance.

Washington Watch

Arab American television:
Strengthening our community's outreach

By Dr. James Zogby

ONE OF the most extraordinary opportunities I have been given to be of service to the Arab American community was my affiliation with the Arab Network of America (ANA), both television and radio.

ANA is the Arab American community's largest nationwide television and radio network. Owned by Middle East Broadcasting Centre, ANA is headquartered in Washington, DC. ANA television reaches tens of thousands of Arab American households via cable and satellite while ANA radio is carried in major U.S. cities and reaches over 850,000 Arab Americans. In addition to successful and long-standing local Arab American television programmes, other Arab networks have entered the American market, including Arab Radio and Television (ART) and Dubai Television.

Later this month ANA television celebrates its fifth anniversary. For the past four years I have hosted "A Capital View," a weekly call-in television and radio programme for ANA. "A Capital View" has brought Arab Americans into direct interaction with U.S. and world leaders and policy makers. As a result, the show not only informs

its viewers, but allows our viewing audience to educate leaders about our community's needs and concerns. It has become a valuable political tool.

During the past four years, "A Capital View" has hosted a wide range of guests, including over a dozen members of Congress. We have had officials from the White House and State Department, major U.S. political personalities, including Reverend Jesse Jackson, and media figures like CNN's Frank Sesno and Bill Press, as well as UPI's venerable Helen Thomas.

"A Capital View" has been host to international leaders as well. Most recently, United Nations Secretary General Boutros Ghali was featured live on our radio programme. During the past several years PNA President Yasser Arafat, Queen Noor, and a number of other government leaders from the PNA, Lebanon, Kuwait, Egypt and even Bosnia have spoken directly to our community through the vehicle afforded by ANA.

There are times when the show does not only educate, but rather provides the needed comfort when our community is hurting.

Our very first programme came within a week of the bombing of the World Trade

Centre. There was widespread fear within the community that Muslims living in the U.S. would experience a backlash. Our guest on "A Capital View" was Congressman Craig Washington, a member of the Judiciary Committee. Taking phone calls on the air and speaking directly to Arab American fears, the congressman helped create calm and gave some assurance that our community had allies who would defend our rights.

On the night of the Oklahoma City bombing we were on air speaking live to Arab American families in Oklahoma City. They had the opportunity to reach out to the rest of the community — to describe their fears and to tell of real anti-Arab incidents that had occurred.

In the weeks that followed, we kept in touch with our community in Oklahoma City. They were strengthened by the support that had received from the rest of the community and we became a stronger community by an increased ability to reach out and bring so many Arab American homes together every evening.

ANA Television has been a powerful tool in helping us educate the administration about Arab American concerns as well. For

months we tried to convince the State Department of the impact the genocide in Bosnia was having on Arab attitudes towards U.S. policy. They continued to see Bosnia in a European context only until one State Department official appeared as a guest on "A Capital View." Since his area of speciality was the Middle East, he expected to receive calls about the peace process; however, two-thirds of the callers that night spoke of their outrage over genocide and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. As he left the studio that night, my guest acknowledged that he now understood the depth of feeling and the impact that Bosnia was having on our community.

Similarly, the show provided Arab Americans with an opportunity to supply U.S. officials with feedback regarding the ups and downs of the peace process. We have also used the show to discuss a wide range of domestic issues that affect our community. We have debated health care reform and the budget crisis with White House officials, we have discussed affirmative action and abortion with congressmen. And, of course, we have talked about electoral politics.

One of my proudest moments on the show came the week after the November elections. Arab Americans from across the U.S. called in to report on the political activity of our community in their area.

One ANA reporter from Michigan said that he interviewed fifty Arab American voters, and discovered that twenty-eight had voted for the first time. Many of them said they had been encouraged to vote by watching ANA.

This is television at its best. ANA is serving Arab Americans as a tool to strengthen the community and to provide it with real opportunities for citizen education and participation. When our Arab American organisations were first formed in Washington over twenty years ago, we often-times had difficulties in securing meetings with very low level White House officials. Now, weekly on ANA, Arab Americans across the country have the opportunity to speak directly to policy makers — to become informed and to inform them.

This is not only a reflection of the progress our community has made, it is also a direct result of the contribution that ANA has made to our work.

Israel's neighbours — time to disengage?

By Gwynne Dyer

"PALESTINIANS CAN expect a comparable status to that of the inhabitants of Puerto Rico or of the Principality of Andorra." — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

"It is important that people should understand that Andorra is not some kind of territory. It is a country." — Meritxell Mateu, Andorran ambassador to France

Netanyahu may be ignorant about Andorra, but his intention is clear: Palestinians must remain forever subject to Israel's will. And Netanyahu's current term in office only expires in the year 2000 — so what are Israel's Arab neighbours to do?

Six months after the Likud Party narrowly won power from the Labour government that negotiated the 1993 Oslo peace accords with the Palestinians, it is clear that there will be no further progress on any of the issues still to be addressed under the Oslo accords.

Netanyahu's government wants peace, of course, but a peace in which Israel makes no concessions, gives up no land, and maintains a perpetual colonial authority over the 2 million Palestinians living in the occupied territories. Indeed, far from concealing that attitude, it positively flaunts it.

Just this week, Netanyahu faced the cameras beside Ron Nachman, mayor of Ariel, and boasted that that particular Jewish settlement, home to around one-tenth of the 145,000 Jewish settlers on the West Bank, would double in size during his term in office.

Netanyahu's cabinet colleague Ariel Sharon said earlier this month that he plans to build two whole new cities in the West Bank, adding another 100,000 Jewish settlers to the region. And after months of stalling and weeks of intense negotiations, Netanyahu still cannot bring himself to pull Israeli troops out of most of the West Bank city of Hebron, although it was specifically agreed by the Labour government before last spring's election.

It is time for Israel's neighbours to bite the bullet — not only about the nature of this government, but about the changed character of Israel itself.

Netanyahu won the last election narrowly, but he won it fair and square. The key elements of the population that boosted the right wing into power were the "Oriental" Jews, the ultra-orthodox, the settler population and recent Russian immigrants.

Apart from the Russians, all these groups have far higher birth rates than Labour's supporters. (The 20 members of the Israeli parliament who represent the various religious parties have an average of six children each). In future elections, these intransigent and sometimes fanatical groups will play an ever larger role, so there is little chance of the old order returning.

The right-wing Israeli academic Mordechai Nisan triumphantly summed up the change: "The emergence of a Jewish Israel — distinct from the socialist, secular, European-style, Mediterranean-flavoured, American-mimicking, bi-national, democratic one — was the most vibrant and important result of the election."

Netanyahu's own rather Americanised style conceals the reality. For almost fifty years, Arab intellectuals have been saying that they would not mind so much if Israel could only be a real Middle Eastern country rather than an arrogant Western intrusion into the region. Well, they have finally got their wish. The new "Jewish Israel" is as devout, as emotional, as irrational as you could possibly want.

So what are Israel's neighbours to do? The Palestinians, of course, have no choice: they are condemned to perpetual colonial status until and unless a renewed infatada eventually wears down Israel's resolve. But what are Egypt, Jordan and Syria to do?

As Palestinian frustration mounts, the next round of killing in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip may be much worse than the backlash in September after the Israeli government unilaterally opened a new tunnel entrance under Temple Mount "which expresses our sovereignty over Jerusalem," as Netanyahu put it. Seventy people were killed that time; next time, it may be hundreds.

President Hafez Assad of Syria must be profoundly grateful that he did not also sign a peace treaty with Israel. The return of the Golan Heights, which was his price for peace, would

have been phased over a long period, and the Likud government would certainly now be renegeing on that commitment too. "That would have placed Assad in a truly desperate position, especially as he has no viable military option. Israel enjoys absolute military superiority over all its Arab neighbours combined, without even counting its large stock of nuclear weapons."

And Yasser Arafat? He will be lucky to survive at all.

The Palestinian fundamentalists of Hamas and Islamic Jihad achieved their goal of wrecking the peace by deploying the suicide bombers who ensured Netanyahu's election, but their success will not be complete until they have eliminated Arafat as well.

Israel's neighbours face the nearly impossible task of hanging on for four long years in the hope (but only a faint hope) that Israelis may then elect a government that is genuinely interested in pursuing the peace process again. To hang on, they must, above all, survive the anger at home against their failed peace policy.

That means the Arab leaders must cut their contacts with Israel to the bare legal minimum: No more going to summits because the Americans ask them to, no more reciprocal visits with Netanyahu, nothing that suggests they accept or approve of his actions. Otherwise, they will be gone long before Netanyahu goes.

LETTERS

7.7% or 17.1%?

To the Editor:

Dr. Fahed Fanek's article "Unemployment stands at 7.7 per cent only" (Jordan Times, Dec. 1, 1996) claiming that the unemployment rate is 7.7 per cent is faulty. In fact, the article committed a grand error in applying basic economic principles and definitions.

The purpose of my letter is to correct the error in Dr. Fanek's article and to establish the correct unemployment rate based upon the subject article's figures.

The unemployment rate is a very important number used by Jordan not only in policy planning and formulation but also to demonstrate need and to secure aid from nations and international organisations. If these donors start to believe that we have such a low unemployment rate, while in fact it is much higher than the 7.7 per cent rate which the article claimed, badly needed aid may be stopped and Jordan would hurt.

The article used a study that was conducted by the Department of Statistics in cooperation with the International Centre for Social and Applied Studies and Research, International Development Research of Canada and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The following is a quote from the article where the error was made: "The survey revealed that the ratio of the employed among the 15 to 75 year olds is 36.8 per cent. This does not mean that 64.2 per cent of this category of population is unemployed. Actually 17 per cent of them are regular students in their classes, 29.7 per cent are housewives, 0.5 per cent have special income and do not need to work, 2.8 per cent are disabled one way or another and cannot work, 1.8 per cent are retired persons, 3.8 per cent are other cases. Thus, the number representing people seeking employment makes only 7.7 per cent."

The article used the wrong approach to calculate the level of unemployment because it assumed that all the people who are between the ages of 15 and 75 constitute the labour force, when in fact that is not the case. The labour force, according to basic economic principles and well-known definitions, consists of those that are between the ages of 15 and 75 who are able to work, available for work, and are either working or seeking employment.

Additionally, in some countries, like the U.S., the labour force does not include people who have not sought employment in the last month because this means that they do not want to work.

What the article committed, in not establishing the size of the labour force, was therefore a cardinal sin. It expanded the labour force to include all people and after deducting everything from this huge pool of people, the article came up with a meaningless number from an economist's perspective.

Let us recalculate the unemployment rate for the numbers given in the article and in accordance with the basic principles. I will assume, since we are dealing with percentages, and without a loss of generality, that there are 100 people between the ages of 15 and 75; thus we can easily convert the percentages to absolute numbers. Deduct from this number 55.6 people which consists of: 17 students, 29.7 housewives, 0.5 people who do not want to work because they have special incomes, 2.8 persons who are disabled and therefore cannot work, 1.8 people who are retired, and lump all the other cases in 3.8 people. Thus the size of the labour force, according to the definition, is 44.4 people. This number consists of the people who are employed and unemployed. The article tells us that the number of people who are employed is 36.8; therefore, by simply deducting the number from 44.4, the number of unemployed is 7.6 people. But this is not the unemployment rate, which is calculated by dividing the number of the unemployed (7.6 people) by the labour force (44.4 people). Dividing 7.6 into 44.4, we obtain 17.1 per cent, which is an unemployment rate that is closer to the official figures and even higher than those recently published. (Accurate economic data, according to a recent issue of The Economist magazine, is becoming a scarce commodity in the whole world).

Thus the unemployment rate, when calculated according to well-established economic principles and using the exact same figures of the article, is 17.1 per cent and not 7.6 per cent as the article falsely claimed. I hope that this error will be noted and corrected.

Yusuf Mansur, Amman.

OCCURRING TO ME

The murk of work

By Ali Kassay

The problem with the social sciences is that they tend themselves so agreeably to controversy. Unlike natural sciences, there are no absolutes. As a result you end up with a vast array of theories and interpretations that say the opposite of one another about the same thing. You read one of these hypotheses and think that it makes sense. "At last," you say to yourself, "now I have it in a nutshell, and I can move on to other things." This is where you make the mistake of your life because, in all probability, these other things will turn out to be opposing theories and interpretations that make just as much sense, and they take you back to square one.

I found myself in exactly this situation last week, as a result of an article I had written on the inadequacy of salaries in Jordan. My intention was to throw a different opinion on the widely circulated notion that labour in Jordan is good-value-for-money, which should attract foreign investors. The point I raised was based on a model developed by Professor Michael Porter of the Harvard Business School, which states, among other things, that keeping costs of production low in order to sell cheap does not create prosperity in the nation.

Instead, according to this model, producers should seek to sell competitively rather than cheap, even though it would mean a higher sale price due to higher costs of production. The last part would include higher wages and salaries which would motivate personnel, and help create sophisticated demand.

The first businessman to comment on these ideas challenged every one of them, and I feel obliged, in all honesty, to reflect his opinions. In particular, he dismissed the notion that Jordanian labour is cheap. Cost of labour, he maintained, should not be measured purely in terms of salaries and wages. Instead, it should be linked to productivity, by calculating the cost of labour per unit of output.

According to him, most enterprises are over-staffed. Moreover, should someone attempt to trim down his staff level, he would be subjected to such virulent attacks by the tabloids, Parliament, and anyone else who stands to gain political mileage from the affair, that he would be compelled to reemploy the redundant staff along with many more of their cousins. Because of this separation between job security and productivity, on top of the absence of rewards for good service, complacency reigns unchallenged. This apathy translates itself in greater expenses, such as more rapid depreciation of buildings, plant, and machinery due to inadequate maintenance. Due to all these factors, output per labourer in Jordan, he calculated, sinks to roughly one percent of that in Germany, for instance. Therefore, he concluded, unless the German worker is paid more than eighty times as much as his Jordanian counterpart, he remains better value for money. Look, this is too confusing. I just want someone to tell me authoritatively whether our labour is cheap or expensive and I do not care how he works it out.

American Muslim organisations forge understandings

By Joanne L. Nix

WASHINGTON — In the United States today there are more than 1,000 mosques, of which more than three-fourths have opened since 1980, and an estimated 5 to 6 million Muslims who make up the second largest religious community in the country. Through immigration, births and conversions, Islam is one of the fastest-growing religions in the United States. The increasing numbers of Muslims make them an emerging voice in cities and towns across the country.

When it comes to understanding the role of Islam in moulding the lives, identity, values and moral sense of its adherents, most Americans are still relatively unfamiliar with Muslim beliefs and culture and many Muslims find themselves explaining their diet, dress and other religious requirements to teachers and employers.

But thanks to a growing number of inter-religious organisations emerging

throughout the United States, American non-Muslims have discovered that the rewards for religious understanding can be great. In cases when committed Muslims and concerned non-Muslims have come together to confront issues and explore ideas, perceptions have changed, prejudices have been eradicated and new ties have been created in the community.

Individuals such as First Lady Hillary Clinton have led the way by acknowledging Muslim religious and cultural holidays and celebrating them with Muslim Americans. Others, such as William Cardinal H. Keeler, former president of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, have been instrumental in forging ties between Christian and Muslims.

American colleges are in the forefront of inter-religious exchange. Once such facility, the Centre for Muslim-Christian Understanding, is located on the campus of Washington's Georgetown University.

In the spring of 1995, reli-

gious scholars and the public gathered at Georgetown to mark the formal dedication of a new wing to house the centre's offices.

John L. Esposito, the centre's director and professor of Religious and International Affairs at Georgetown, is a long-time advocate of Muslim-Christian understanding. "We have differences and we have similarities. Understanding does not require conversion, but knowledge and respect of others," he says. He describes the centre as a place for scholars in the Washington, D.C., area and abroad to "discuss, debate and disagree as well as find points to agree upon."

Founded in 1993, the Centre for Muslim-Christian Understanding invites religious scholars and the public to study Muslim-Christian relations through seminars and meetings with representatives of the two religions and members from other religious groups.

The programme also features teaching and research at the undergraduate and

graduate levels and public affairs activities.

Islamic centres in the U.S. are located throughout the country in a variety of cities such as Nashville, Tennessee; Raleigh, North Carolina; Columbus, Georgia; Biloxi, Mississippi; Tampa, Florida; and Washington, D.C., where their sponsors are familiar with business and social activities in the community. Local Islamic centres and Masjid offer weekend schools, Arabic training, introductory courses in Islam, lectures and social events open to all.

In areas with small Muslim populations, these institutions offer Friday prayers and at least one of the daily prayers. They are often the only place where Muslims and the general public can obtain Korans, films, literature, audio tapes and video tapes about Islam.

Nationally known Muslim organisations have been formed by American Muslims to serve the interests of both newly arrived and long-time residents of this country. The American

Muslim Council, a non-profit socio-political organisation established in 1990, is the leading national political organisation of the Muslim community in America. Its national leadership includes Muslim community leaders from across the United States and reflects the vast array of races and ethnic groups that make up the nation's Muslim community.

Last year, the council sponsored the first-ever iftar (breaking of the daily fast) dinner celebration on Capitol Hill for members of the U.S. Congress, representatives from government agencies, the Clinton administration and Muslim, Christian and Jewish leaders from the local community and from across the nation.

They also coordinated the first Eid Al Fitr reception hosted by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton ever held at the White House for approximately one hundred Muslims from around the country and their families. Abdul Rahman Al Amou-

di, executive director of the American Muslim Council explains: "It is our firm belief that the best way to counter false and maligning information about American Muslims is to take up a constructive role as proactive participants in the American political process. By taking responsibility for our own political advocacy, Muslims are exercising one of their basic obligations as participants in American democracy."

Another newly formed non-political religious and educational institution, the American Muslim Foundation, founded in the state of Washington, is growing thanks to sponsorship by Muslims throughout the country. Its aim is to aid newly arrived Muslim residents so they will be able to preserve their religious identity. It serves American Muslims of all races, national origins, or religious schools of thought.

In 1981, the Centre for Judaic Studies of the University of Denver, Colorado, formed the Institute for Islamic-Judaic Studies.

Members of this association include scholars from all over the world with interests in various aspects of Islamic-Judaic studies such as Islamic-Jewish relations and Jewish life under Islam.

Participants from Denver University and leading members of the Islamic and Jewish communities in Denver — and around the country — have sponsored and participated in its activities. The institute's conferences have attracted national and international attention resulting in articles and opinion pieces in the New York Times, the Washington Post, Al Majalla (London) and Yediot Aharonot (Tel Aviv).

Representative of groups at the local level is the Al Hewan Centre, located in the Washington, D.C., area. It was established in December 1994 by Al Hewan magazine and sponsors a wide range of intra-Arab events in Arabic and English among Arabs of all backgrounds. The centre sponsors cultural programme and advances understanding and coopera-

tive relationships by promoting seminars among scholars, diplomats, businessmen and members of the media.

These are just a few of the many groups in the United States which foster educational programmes and dialogue with non-Muslims and promote lobbying efforts on issues important to the American Muslim community.

Many of these Muslim organisations now have computer home pages. Anyone with an interest in Islam or questions about Muslim practices can go on line and visit web sites or Internet mailing lists on Islam.

Some publish periodic news releases about major Arab holidays and cultural events, produce position papers, action alerts and textbooks on religion and Arabic and provide Korans to individuals and organisations upon request.

United States Information Agency

Ties based on values

(Continued from page 12)

all external aid to Jordan, while the combined aid from European Union (EU) countries as well as the EU as a body itself was worth \$951 million, or 44 per cent; U.S. assistance during the same period accounted for 11 per cent (\$236 million).

In 1995, Japan's assistance to Jordan totalled \$422 million, including \$215 million in balance of payment support in addition to \$152 million in rescheduled debts. Japan has provided funds worth \$167 million so far in the Japanese fiscal year 1996 (April 1996 to March 1997) and further assistance is being discussed.

Japan also maintains a "grass-roots" development programme in Jordan under which it extends direct aid to individuals for deserving small-size projects.

On the political front, Ambassador Kimura conceded that his country could not do much in concrete terms to advance the Middle East peace process, but he said, Tokyo was involved in behind-the-scenes contacts to convince Israel to meet the requirements of peace with the

Arabs.

Japan does not extend any financial assistance to Israel, and, as such, it is not in a position to use aid as leverage with the Jewish state, he pointed out. At the same time, Japanese leaders have used every opportunity to convey to the Israelis that Japanese-Israeli business ties could suffer if the peace process remains stalemated, said the ambassador.

Israel is one of the few countries which enjoy a trade surplus with Japan. Israeli exports to Japan were worth \$1.2 billion in 1995 compared with Japanese exports to the Jewish state worth \$700 million.

"We have expressed our view to Israel that it is very important to speedily implement the agreements it has signed" with the Palestinians, said Mr. Kimura.

The ambassador also referred to Japan's active participation in the multilateral working groups on the environment, tourism and water resources and noted that projects like marine pollution control and a new regional tourism body were the result of the work of these groups.

OSCE summit ends with agreement

(Continued from page 1)

because the OSCE requires unanimity, the dispute jeopardised the overall accord.

At the last minute the United States proposed a procedural measure to bypass the problem. The offending clause on the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute was removed and read out separately by OSCE Chairman Corti.

The last OSCE summit in Budapest two years ago collapsed in chaos after delegates failed to agree on a resolution on war-ravaged Bosnia-Herzegovina, in particular because of Russian disagreement.

Mr. Corti said the agreement on Nagorno-Karabakh was a "convincing solution" to the threatened blockade.

"A certain suspense remained until the end of the summit, but I think we have found a convincing solution," he told a press conference immediately after the closing ceremony.

Portuguese Foreign Minister Jaime Gama said it

proved that the OSCE discussed matters of substance. "This is not a static organisation, it is an alive institution," he told the joint press conference.

Monday's U.S.-Russian tension over NATO expansion into Eastern Europe came despite agreement to revise a cold war-era arms limitation treaty as demanded by Moscow.

In one of the most concrete achievements of the summit, it agreed to review the 1990 treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), signed between 16 NATO states and 14 members of the ex-Warsaw Pact.

The summit was also marked by condemnation of Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko over a disputed referendum.

The OSCE "reaffirmed the widely shared conviction that the referendum of Nov. 24 was conducted in contradiction with the constitutional procedures and cannot be considered as legitimate," said a statement.

'British ignorant about Gulf'

ABU-DHABI (AFP) — British schools need to introduce lessons on the history of Gulf Arab states because the people are ignorant about that region, British Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Jeremy Hanley said on Tuesday.

"There is a great deal of ignorance still in the U.K. about the nature of Gulf states... about the nature of Islam for instance," Mr. Hanley told the official Emirates news agency WAM.

"I think we need to help our people, particularly our young people, here in the U.K. to learn more about the Gulf."

Jordan stresses need to bring 'old Mideast into new world'

(Continued from page 1)

paign against Islamophobia (fear of Islam) and, above all, to restore the human dimension in the conduct of Middle Eastern politics.

"In order to ensure regional stability, international idiom and international standards must be applied to the field of security and cooperation. There is a growing consensus on the need for consultative mechanisms, loosely based on successful international models such as CSCE. This would help to institutionalise open dialogue, and develop a sense of corporate identity, which in turn will help to deal with the root causes of conflict before it arises," Prince Hassan said.

"Clearly, we need a broader definition of security, covering not only military factors, but the political, economic and human dimensions. Such a definition must encompass absolutes such as the water, energy and environment cluster. The objective is

therefore not an exclusive alliance aimed at some common threat, but an inclusive grouping aimed at reducing tensions and creating norms of reconciliation," he stressed.

"... In the field of culture... and despite a long history of cultural and religious tolerance, the people of the Middle East have spent most of this century in psychological as well as physical fortresses. I am sorry to say that the Arab-Israeli conflict has distorted perceptions of each other's cultures, resulting in fear, ignorance and hatred. We therefore feel that a process of inter-faith and inter-cultural dialogue is absolutely vital. We need to demystify and de-demonise each other if mental and emotional barriers are to come down. "While we in Jordan have joined the campaign against anti-Semitism, we hope our Jewish counterparts will join the campaign to stave off Islamophobia, or fear of Islam. Unless we mount joint effort, as we successfully did in Bosnia-

Herzegovina, one day we will encounter an anti-Middle Eastern bias."

Mohammad Sacirbey, Bosnia's envoy to the U.N. who attended yesterday's conference session as a panelist, lauded a joint effort made by Jordan and Israel last year to help his country in its war-torn state, saying it was an example to follow in international politics and resolution of conflicts.

"We need to restore the human dimension to the conduct of Middle East affairs, the Crown Prince said. "Behind all the headlines and speeches that our region generates are the lives of ordinary human beings. If something does not contribute to their welfare, their productivity, then I believe it must be rejected. For it is they, not governments or businesses, who hold the future of the region in their hands."

Crown Prince Hassan concluded his address to the conference, which this year has devoted a special session to Jordan as the

gateway to the Middle East and North Africa, by asking what the region's priorities should be in the years ahead.

"The key would seem to be partnerships: partnerships for peace, cooperation, development and security," he said. "For through dynamic partnerships, we can bring international idiom and standards to the region, and therefore enable the region to play a dynamic part in the Global City."

Partnerships between private and public sectors as well as between governments; partnerships with international financial institutions and regional and global bodies; these must be our priorities for the future. I would therefore invite you all to join with us in partnership, to build and to be part of a truly new Middle East."

Upon his arrival in Holland the Crown Prince had dinner with her Majesty Queen Beatrix and other royal family members.

Israel to allow Jordanian trucks

(Continued from page 1)

the two countries, said Dr. Muasher.

"We would be seeking to broaden the list of (tariff-free) products that Jordan can export to Israel and also to lower the (customs duties and other taxes) on other products," he told a weekly press briefing.

The information minister said Jordan would also be discussing aspects of an economic cooperation agreement that Israel signed with the Palestine Liberation Organisation after the two sides entered the interim autonomy accords in September 1993.

Meanwhile, opposition is growing in Jordan against the Kingdom hosting an Israeli trade fair. While opposition parties and professional associations which oppose normalisation of ties with Israel reject the idea altogether, businessmen and trade associations say it is not the proper time for Israel to promote business in

Jordan.

In Parliament on Monday, opposition members called on the government to cancel the plan to host the Dec. 15-18 trade fair at Marj Al Hammam on the outskirts of Amman. Several trade unions and two businessmen's associations also oppose the exhibition.

Businessman Fakhr Nasser has resisted the calls for cancelling the event, arguing that it was purely commercial.

He also argues that the event could advance the cause of peace pointing out that Israeli businessmen, many of whom are upset over the policies of hardline Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, could be persuaded to lobby Mr. Netanyahu to change his policies. Officials point out that establishing trade between Jordan and Israel is part of the agreements contained in the peace treaty between the two countries and that the private sector was free to act on its own to develop such relations.

Israeli premier shifts tack

(Continued from page 1)

release of Palestinian prisoners, creation of "safe passage" corridors between autonomy areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the resumption of negotiations on a final settlement for the territories.

At the Lisbon press conference, Mr. Netanyahu accused the Palestinians of stalling in the Hebron talks in "expectation that there would be an international pressure campaign launched at Israel" to force its hand in the talks.

He said such pressure has come from the Arab camp "without much success," but that Palestinian hopes that Europe and the United States would join in have gone unanswered.

Concerning a final peace settlement for the Palestinian territories, Mr. Netanyahu reiterated that his government would not

yield to Palestinian demands for full sovereignty.

"What we're going to propose in this final settlement is a scheme which would balance the Palestinians' need for freedom and our need for security," he said.

Mr. Netanyahu went on to compare the Palestinians to "ethnic minorities" seeking self-determination in Europe, saying he felt certain European governments would also reject the granting of sovereignty which included an independent army, control over airspace and water resources or the freedom to enter military pacts with third parties.

"I think that the crucial test before us towards the close of the 20th century is fashioning a third way between subjugation and unbridled self-determination," he said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Assad meets Iranian minister

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syrian President Hafez Al Assad on Tuesday met with Iranian Foreign Minister Ali Akbar Velayati who is in Damascus for a three-day visit, an official said. The meeting took place in the presence of Syria's Foreign Minister Farouk Al Sharaa and Iran's ambassador to Syria, Hassan Akhtari. Mr. Sharaa and Mr. Velayati discussed "developments in the regional situation and bilateral relations between the two friendly countries," the official said. On his arrival on Monday, Mr. Velayati said he was carrying a message from Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani to the Syrian leader. Iran and Syria have had close relations since the start of the 1980s and Damascus was Tehran's main ally during the 1980-1988 Iran-Iraq war. Mr. Velayati last visited the Syrian capital in April when he took part in negotiations to conclude a ceasefire in South Lebanon between Israel and the pro-Iranian Hizbollah militia.

Iran calls for stronger ties with Moscow

MOSCOW (AFP) — Iran's economics and finance minister, who is on an official visit to Russia, called Tuesday for a boost to bilateral cooperation, which has fallen off since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. The minister, Morteza Mohammad Khan, said Russia and Iran should seek to strengthen ties, particularly in the energy sector, Itar-Tass news agency reported. Mr. Mohammad Khan was here to attend the first meeting in five years of the Russian-Iranian economics commission. The Iranian minister said he believed that Russia and Iran could "soon form an alliance in the gas sector," but did not give details. "Our country intends to reduce crude oil exports and to increase its deliveries of oil products. In this area Russia could be our crucial partner, and we are very interested in the transfer of Russian technologies to Iran," he told Itar-Tass.

Israeli officer arrested for drug smuggling

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An Israeli military officer has been arrested for allegedly trying to smuggle 13 kilograms of heroin into Israel, the Jerusalem Post reported Tuesday. Major Salam Almiat, 45, a member of Israel's minority bedouin community, was charged with receiving the drugs from contacts in Jordan, the newspaper said. Three other bedouins, who were not identified, were also arrested, it said. The Post said that Maj. Almiat, who headed a unit of armoured vehicles in the south of the country, handed over the drugs over to his three bedouin accomplices at a military camp on Nov. 6. They were arrested by police, who had been tipped off to the transaction, and Maj. Almiat was picked up soon after.

Israeli official killed in car accident

TEL AVIV (AP) — Jerusalem's Israeli deputy mayor, Shmuel Meir, was killed Tuesday afternoon in a car accident, the mayor's office said. He was 42. Mr. Meir, an orthodox Jew and city council member from the National Religious Party, actively supported the strengthening of the Jewish presence in Arab East Jerusalem and strongly opposed Palestinian construction in the city. He was one of eight deputy mayors. Meir's funeral was to be held Thursday night at the Mount of Olives. He is survived by a wife and eight children.

Africans discuss position as Egypt stands by Boutros Ghali

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — African representatives at the United Nations discussed candidates for U.N. chief on Tuesday as Egypt firmly stood by Boutros Ghali for a second term.

Speaking after Egyptian authorities announced that Mr. Ghali's name would not be submitted to a second vote in the Security Council "at this stage," Egypt's permanent representative to the United Nations strongly denied that his country was dropping its candidature.

Soliman Awad, number two at the Egyptian mission, told AFP that his

country's decision not to put Mr. Ghali's name to a Security Council vote was "the best tactic for us to support our candidate."

He said that the 74-year Egyptian "should not be treated on the same footing as other candidates."

Mr. Awad noted that Mr. Ghali obtained a "landslide" in favour of his candidacy on Nov. 19, when the United States was alone among the 15 Security Council members to veto his candidacy.

"When he will get 15 votes, then we will put him up for another vote," Mr. Awad said. African diplomats here

agreed that Mr. Ghali was likely to remain on the sidelines while other "weak" candidates were the object of vetoes from one or more of the five permanent Security Council members with veto power — Britain, China, France, Russia and the United States.

The U.N. African group was discussing fresh candidates for the top U.N. post after Organisation of African Unity Chairman Paul Biya, the Cameroon president, called on African leaders to put forward new names to ensure that Africa retained a second five-year term as U.N. chief.

But Mr. Biya said that the names should be submitted alongside Mr. Ghali's candidature.

Mr. Ghali's spokeswoman Sylvana Foa told AFP that as of Tuesday the U.N. chief had no intention of stepping aside.

Italian diplomats, whose country currently holds the Security Council presidency, said that no African names had been submitted directly to the council since Mr. Biya's letter to African leaders on Friday.

Several diplomats said they would not be surprised if some African

names were proposed by the end of the week, but that serious candidates would be reluctant to pit themselves against Mr. Ghali while he remains in the running.

Mr. Ghali's current mandate expires on Dec. 31, and Washington insists that a new secretary-general will be in place on Jan. 1. U.S. Ambassador Madeleine Albright has ruled out any compromise which would enable Mr. Ghali to remain in office.

Mr. Biya's move appeared aimed at breaking the deadlock in the Security Council, which recommends its choice of

secretary-general to the U.N. General Assembly for election.

Among possible contenders from Africa are U.N. Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Kofi Annan of Ghana, OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim of Tanzania, Ivory Coast Foreign Minister Amara Essy, Organisation of Islamic Conference Secretary-General Hamid Al Gabid of Niger and former Ugandan Foreign Minister Olara Otunnu.

Economic growth in Israel must benefit neighbours — Netanyahu

SCHEVENINGEN, the Netherlands (AFP) — Economic growth in Israel must benefit Israel's neighbours, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Tuesday, stressing a need for "cooperation and not domination."

Mr. Netanyahu, speaking by video link from Lisbon, told a global panel conference that "Israel has an enormous growth potential and I don't want this future for us alone but also for Palestinians, Jordanians and Egyptians."

He said: "I'd like to see a

flow of trade, knowledge, ideas from Israel to its neighbours."

He wanted to see "cooperation and not domination."

Mr. Netanyahu said he expected per capita gross domestic product in Israel to "double in 10 years" and then foreign investments would grow considerably as many sectors of the economy were privatised and deregulated.

So far this year such investment had increased by 30 per cent to \$2 billion, he said.

The Israeli economy had been successful for three reasons. These were an exceptional concentration of high-powered brains, resulting in part from a flow of immigrants from the former Soviet Union, a strong military structure which pushed technology forward, and "the presence of scientific institutions with an international reputation."

Mr. Netanyahu said that he had a "strong commitment" to the Middle East peace process, saying that "we have made construc-

tive propositions to solve the impasse on Hebron and we plan to resume negotiations with Syria."

The road to peace remained strewn with obstacles but he saw "no future for Israel without peace."

He argued for the creation of a permanent forum for dialogue between Israel and Palestine along the lines of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) for dialogue between East and West Europe.

Greek government refuses to back down as strike worsens

ATHENS (AFP) —

Greece's Socialist government warned Tuesday that it will not abandon austerity measures, as farm workers stepped up strike action which has paralysed highways for six days.

Farmers began their action on Thursday, the day before the Greek government unveiled its tough new budget aimed at enabling the country to qualify for the single European currency.

On Tuesday, they blocked routes in 17 of the country's 52 departments, while port workers also severely disrupted sea trade, especially in Piraeus near Athens.

Farmers are continuing to call for a meeting with Prime Minister Costas Simitis as a precondition to any negotiation. The premier is

about to return from Lisbon, where he has been attending the summit of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Government spokesman Yannis Nicolaou has stated that no meeting has been scheduled between the union leaders and the head of government.

"The government is not prepared to negotiate claims which would jeopardise its policy of economic convergence with its European partners," Mr. Nicolaou said.

According to the spokesman, "the government has demonstrated good will, understanding and a receptivity to dialogue. It is now waiting for the other side to do the same."

Overnight, farmers rejected proposals from Agriculture Minister Stephanos Tzoumakas on freezing debts for two years.

The minister also promised he would satisfy most of the cotton-producer's demands, which include raising the price of cotton.

On Tuesday, farm workers set up road-blocks in 17 departments.

The hard-core of the strike action is in the plain of Thessaly where cotton producers who began the protest movement have paralysed the region.

In the north, access to Salonika is extremely difficult and demonstrators were trying to block routes to the airport which are guarded by police.

Obstacles stand in way of Lebanon-EU partnership accord

BEIRUT (Agence) — A number of obstacles still stand in the way of a partnership accord between Lebanon and the European Union, a foreign ministry official said Tuesday.

"There are still some lingering points which we discussed today," said the director general, Zafer Hassan, after talks with an EU team led by Tomas Dupla del Moral of the EU Department for the Southern Mediterranean and Middle East.

Mr. Hassan said negotiations will continue with the EU for an economic, social and cultural partnership accord which both parties have been trying to reach since last year.

The decision to draw up the accord came after the 1995 Barcelona economic conference during which EU states decided to finance projects worth \$6 billion in Mediterranean

countries. Last month, a visiting EU official said the partnership accord was due to be reached by the end of this year.

"We cannot predict a specific date for the signing of the accord as long as negotiations are underway," Mr. Hassan said. Further negotiations will focus on agricultural and emigration issues as well as the services sector.

The EU has signed four protocol accords with Lebanon since 1977 and provided more than \$300 million to help finance post-war reconstruction projects in Lebanon.

Beirut's MEA workers to stage three-hour strike

In another development, ground crews of Lebanon's national carrier Middle East Airlines (MEA) will on Thursday stage a three-

hour strike to protest against the company's new medical insurance policy, the union of MEA employees said on Tuesday.

"The union decided to stage a three-hour warning strike on Thursday between 10 a.m. (0800 GMT) and 1 p.m. (1100 GMT)," the union representing MEA's 3,200 ground employees said in a statement.

The stoppage will paralyse air activity to and from Beirut airport and will delay four scheduled incoming MEA flights and one outgoing flight.

The statement said the strike was to protest against handing over employees' medical insurance to a private company and demanded the continuation of the current policy of immediate medical expense coverage by the company.

Morocco, Spain agree conversion of \$50 million debt

RABAT (R) — Morocco and Spain on Tuesday signed a deal to convert \$50 million of the debt Rabat owes Madrid into cash available for private investments to attract Spanish investors to the North African country.

The deal was signed in Rabat during a ceremony presided over jointly by Moroccan Finance Minister Mohamed Kabbaj and his Spanish counterpart Rodrigo Rato.

"Today's signature is not for protocol purposes... It is a commitment for close cooperation in future, for better integration of Morocco's economy and its development," Mr. Rato told reporters.

Spanish companies which are interested in investment projects in Morocco "will totally or partly benefit from funds through the Spanish converted debt," the Spanish minister said.

Moroccan officials said there were an estimated 500 Spanish companies operating in Morocco.

Madrid is Morocco's second commercial partner — after France — with an estimated \$1.0 billion a year, officials said.

"Despite cooperation we did not reach the target set by our two governments, (but) Morocco and Spain are involved in several projects such as electricity interconnection and Maghreb Europe gas pipeline projects," Mr. Kabbaj added.

EU approves \$156 m aid for Algeria

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Commission said on Tuesday it had approved 125 million European Currency Units (\$156 million) in aid to help economic reforms in Algeria.

In a statement, the European Union executive said it also planned to lend Algeria a further 100 mil-

lion ECUs to help it cut its debt.

"Algeria faces a major challenge," the commission said.

"It has to transform its state-run, oil-dependent economy into one that is more diversified and depends more on the private sector."

A commission spokesman said at a news briefing that the aid was not intended to bolster the current Algerian government, but was part of a stabilisation and reform programme started in conjunction with the World Bank and International Monetary Fund.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLG	FRF
US Dollar	1.0000	1.6642	0.6078	1.3285	113.59	1.3482	1536.90	1.7552	5.2874
DE Mark	0.6393	1.0000	0.3882	0.8492	72.62	0.8617	982.11	1.1221	3.3786
GB Sterling	1.6452	2.5760	1.0000	2.1859	187.04	2.2181	2530.51	2.8899	8.7057
CH Franc	0.7527	1.1782	0.4566	1.0000	85.48	1.0140	1156.17	132.01	3.9787
JP Yen	0.0088	0.0139	0.0053	0.0118	1.0000	0.0080	0.0080	0.0080	0.0080
CA Dollar	0.7417	1.1342	0.4438	0.9888	1.19	1.0000	1124.34	1.2718	3.8425
IT Lira	0.0007	0.0010	0.0004	0.0009	0.0008	0.0008	1.0000	1.141	3.4369
NL Guilder	0.5697	0.8907	0.3458	0.7588	64.58	0.7677	875.13	1.0000	3.0107
FR Franc	0.1891	0.2957	0.1148	0.2529	21.47	0.2549	33.19	33.1900	1.0000

Energy					Mid-East Currencies				
Oil	Last	Previous	Change	Point	Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	JPY
Brent	24.35	24.40	-0.05		SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4172	0.16195	30.315
WT Texas	24.70	24.65	+0.05		AE Dirham	0.2724	0.42626	0.16545	30.9683
Bony	24.35	24.40	-0.05		KW Dinar	3.3333	5.21648	2.02429	4.3086
Dubai	21.70	21.65	+0.05		BR Dinar	0.3760	4.16148	1.61525	3.5482
UL Gas	216.00	216.00	0.00		CY Pound	2.1136	3.3048	1.2831	260.084

Metal Prices					Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)				
Metal	Bid	Offer	Change	Point	Currency	1	3	6	12
Gold (oz)	367.2	367.7	0.5		USD	5.37	5.56	5.58	5.50
Silver (oz)	4.59	4.71	0.12		GBP	6.18	6.12	6.53	6.50
Platinum (oz)	370.2	371.2	1.0		JPY	0.23	0.28	0.34	0.32
AL (3 Months)	1525	1528	3		DEM	3.15	3.08	3.06	3.10
CU (3 Months)	2185	2187	2		FRF	3.32	3.32	3.32	3.33
Zinc (3 Months)	1061	1062	1		CHF	2.10	1.97	2.00	1.87
Lead (3 Months)	685	686	1		ITL	7.29	7.02	6.79	6.50
NI (3 Months)	6840	6850	10						

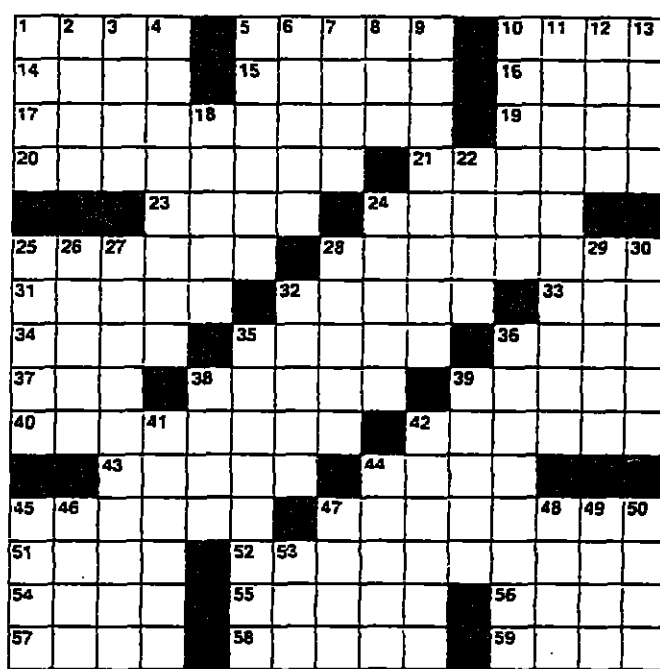
Energy					* JOD Cross Rates				
Commodity	Last	Delivery	Change	Point	Currency	Buy	Sell	Change	Point
Coffee (c/lb)	113.92	Spot			US Dollar	0.708	0.710		
Cocoa (c/lb)	1400	Spot			GB Sterling	1.1868	1.1927		
Sugar (c/lb)	309.2	Spot			DE Mark	0.4513	0.4536		
Wheat (c/lb)	127	Spot			CH Franc	0.5313	0.534		
Soya (c/lb)	21.44	Spot			FR Franc	0.1331	0.1338		
Tea (c/lb)	120	Spot			JP Yen	0.019	0.0221		
Barley (c/lb)	217	Spot			NL Guilder	0.4024	0.4044		
Rice (c/lb)	470	Spot			IT Lira	0.4602	0.4625		

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword

ACROSS

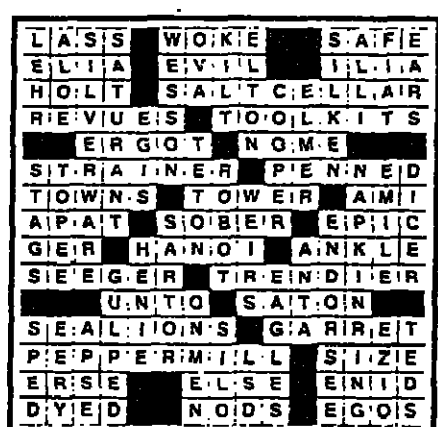
- 1 Information
- 5 Exhorted
- 10 Retired
- 14 Sacred wader
- 15 Work reward
- 16 Grotto
- 17 Lawmen
- 19 Cut kind
- 20 Outer
- 21 Porter's pen name
- 23 Toe woe
- 24 Felicity
- 25 In any event
- 28 Soprano Kirsten
- 31 Massenet opera
- 32 Lager head
- 33 Pindar poem
- 34 Top and high end
- 35 Cube face
- 36 Cut closely
- 37 Carbohydrate suffix
- 38 Borzoi
- 39 Caribbean dance
- 40 Cynically mocking
- 42 Body binder
- 43 Tasty
- 44 Ad type
- 45 "The Blue" (Ladd film)
- 47 Rustic
- 51 Hurler Hershey
- 52 Engage is rowdy play
- 54 Mythical swan
- 55 Recipient
- 56 Actress Talbot
- 57 Highland youth
- 58 Pot piece
- 59 Cut



by Richard Thomas

DOWN

- 1 Monopoly pair
- 2 "where sweets compacted lie" (Herbert)
- 3 Shading
- 4 Spears
- 5 Supreme god of Greek myth
- 6 Morocco's capital
- 7 Porgy organ
- 8 Legal ending
- 9 Barren
- 10 Entry
- 11 Goes on tour
- 12 At any time
- 13 "eyed (naive)"
- 18 Alkman and Donohue
- 22 Lohy
- 24 Towheaded
- 25 Dumas character
- 26 "apso"
- 27 Turning points
- 28 Cannes coin
- 29 Baked brick
- 30 Warehouse
- 32 Vanable
- 35 Daggers
- 36 Disney output
- 38 Arizona citizen
- 39 Calendar page
- 41 1980s soap
- 42 Turned in chips
- 44 Play the ponies
- 45 Crib companion
- 46 Vicinity
- 47 Andean plateau
- 48 Undo
- 49 Piedmont wine center
- 50 Vault
- 53 "la la"

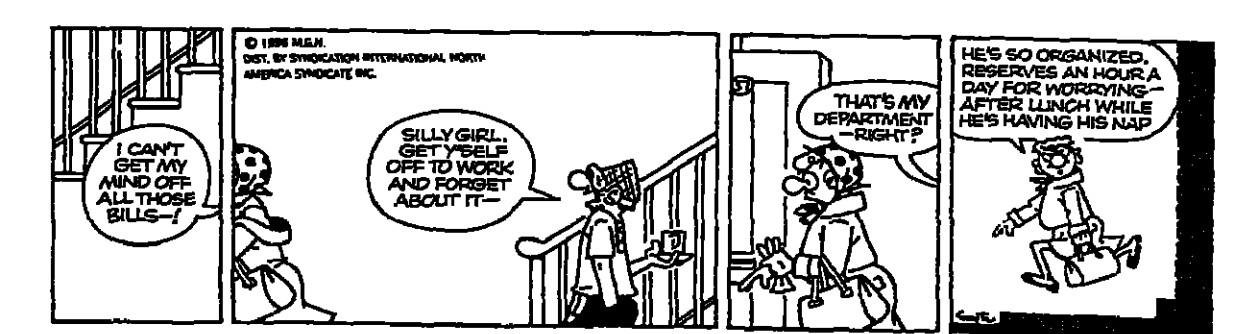


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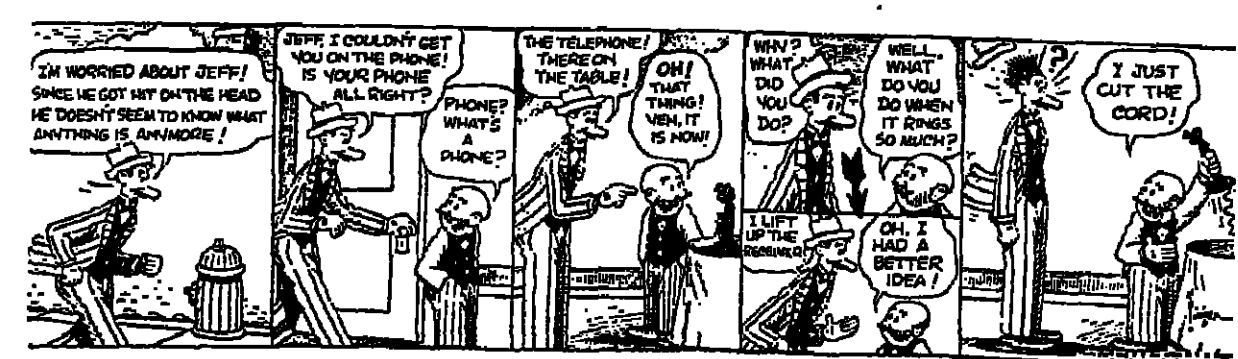
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) It's important today you pay more attention to your home. Get the furniture in better order and add some art. Later this evening you can seek out the advice of fellow associates for you to complete any new projects.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Be more thoughtful today of others' well-being when handling your correspondence, however not at your own expense. This evening can be spent with your loved ones at home relaxing and recharging your batteries.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Go over your accounts today well before you complain to others about them. Build up your bank account for a rainy day and thereby you will have sufficient funds. Later this evening you can meet with fellow associates.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Your ideas today to gain your cherished desires may be incorrect at first, however, later you use the right ones. Tonight will be good for you to consult with knowledgeable people and devise a good course of action.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You don't understand how to get rid of a concern today, however, it will work out. Show more thought and kindness for your loved ones and do some special activity which indicate that you truly do appreciate them being around.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Clarify your wishes in mentality today, so try not to criticise your friends and accept them as they are. Later this evening will be good for you to seek out the advice of a bigwig and ask him or her for some good suggestions.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) A home affair today has to be handled before you go out to responsibilities in the business world. Later this evening will be good for you to go out on the town with close friends and have a wonder time together.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Concentrate today on new interests which can bring you greater progress in the days ahead. Tonight will be a good time for you to show that you do appreciate your loved ones, by doing something special for them.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Analyse a situation today carefully where you mate is concerned and you can be romantically happier. Later this evening will be good for discussing with fellow associates your ideas on how to make your career activities better.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) The situation concerning a close friend could upset you today, so make every effort to study all the angles involved with all career activities. Study a public affair well before you take any action to determine its validity.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Take care you do not leave important duties undone today, or you could lose out where it counts most. This evening can be spent with your loved ones at home and just relax for the pressures of business activities in the days ahead.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You may find it difficult today to enjoy yourself until evening comes, so get busy at the practical during the daytime. Tonight will be good for you to meet with knowledgeable people and determine the best course of action to take.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon.

ber 4, 1996
SCOPE
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as S. Pierson
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- Zircon

Business & Finance

Jordan Times, Wednesday, December 4, 1996

9

Iran, Russia agree to form Caspian oil company

DUBAI (R) — Iran and Russia have agreed to set up a company to look for oil in the Caspian Sea, the official Iranian news agency IRNA said on Tuesday.

The agreement was reached during economic cooperation talks in Moscow late on Monday between Iran's Minister of Economic Affairs Morteza Mohammadkhan and Fuel and Energy Minister Pyotr Rodionov.

It was the joint economic committee's first meeting since the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The two countries agreed to set up a company for joint exploration and exploitation of oil and mineral resources around the Caspian during a trilateral meeting with Turkmenistan last month. Russia said Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan were also welcome to join.

The Caspian Sea, eighth in the world in terms of discovered oil reserves, was divided between the Soviet

Iraq buys food with \$70 million unfrozen assets — Jordanian traders

By Suleiman Al Khalidi
Reuters

AMMAN — Iraq has unfrozen \$70 million worth of funds in a deal arranged by an Austrian firm in exchange for substantial commodities purchases, Jordanian traders said on Tuesday.

Jordanian traders involved with the deal said it was coordinated by Vienna-based finance firm FJ, Elsner company and had enabled Iraq to clinch one of its largest commodity purchases since U.N. sanctions were imposed on Baghdad for its invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

The deal includes supplying Iraq with 160,000-180,000 tonnes of U.K. and Argentine wheat, around 75,000 tonnes of Brazilian sugar, and one 33,000 tonnes cargo of Vietnamese rice. Shipments are for November, December, and January for all the cargo.

Iraq insisted on its only sea outlet Umm Qasr Port, which can handle up to 30,000 tonnes of cargo per vessel, for offloading the cargo rather than Jordan's more developed Aqaba Port, which is also closer to European and South American markets, traders said.

Traders said the recently concluded deal involved the

Austrian firm playing a key role in "putting in place the mechanism" of unblocking around \$70 million of frozen Iraqi assets in European accounts in exchange for the commodities.

Traders said payment terms were 30 days from date of shipment of the cargo.

One Jordanian trader said the prices Iraq paid to Elsner had a considerable margin, with wheat purchases a high \$224.5 per tonne and sugar around \$425 per tonne.

Four 20,000 tonne cargos each of wheat arrived last month in Umm Qasr and one of the six sugar cargoes

was already offloading, traders said.

Elsner initiated the deal with grain traders Glencore and Toepfer, who are both supplying 70,000 tonnes and 90,000 tonnes each of wheat respectively along with the six 13,000 tonnes cargo each of Brazilian sugar and the Vietnamese rice.

The purchases are in addition to a \$12 million protocol deal recently negotiated between Pakistan and Iraq. Iraq originally tendered for 30,000 tonnes of Pakistani rice but actually bought 45,000 tonnes under the protocol at \$245 per tonne, traders say.

Iraq meets most of its needs for rice, estimated at about one million tonnes a year, through imports from either Pakistan, Vietnam and Thailand.

Iraq's Trade Minister Mohammad Mehdi Saleh left Jordan on Monday heading to Vietnam to reach deals for large quantities of rice under old debt settlement payment terms, traders said.

Some Jordanian agents of international grains suppliers have long-standing trade ties with Iraqi grain purchasing bodies and have begun positioning themselves for the coming oil-for-food deal.

Daily Business Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Anti-monopoly draft law finalised

**THE MINISTRY of Industry and Trade has concluded drafting a law banning monopoly and encouraging competition. The draft law aims to prevent economic alliances aiming to monopolise commodities and hiking their prices. The law is part of a host of economic laws which Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti's government announced it will introduce to liberalise the economy.

Representatives of the private sector voiced approval of the draft law, but expressed some reservations regarding articles on fines and other administrative procedures. These representatives are currently studying the draft law and will present their comments and proposals to the ministry before the draft is approved by the Council of Ministers and referred to Parliament.

The Council of Ministers will, meanwhile, discuss another draft law on the Free Zones Corporation. The draft regulates the relationship between the Free Zones Corporation and the Customs Department. It gives foreign investors the right to establish projects in free zones as well as industrial zones for export purposes. (Al Rai)

Eight Jordanian banks have branches in Palestine

Eight Jordanian banks have 42 branches in various parts of the Palestinian self-rule areas, a study by the Housing Bank's Research Centre said. The study said there are four Palestinian banks operating in the self-rule areas, which have only 19 branches. Seven more national banks will start operations in the areas soon after they were granted initial approval, it said. According to the study, there are two Egyptian banks which have four branches in the Palestinian areas, one foreign bank with one branch, two branches for Israeli banks and a representative office for the British Bank of the Middle East. (Al Aswaq)

Private sector to own 67.1%

A report by the Investment Encouragement Corporation expects the percentage of private sector investments to the total number of investments to rise from 61.1 per cent in 1993 to 67.1 per cent in 1997. The report said the volume of investments for the period 1993-97 stands at JD 5,242 million, of which 1,374 are held by the public sector, equalling 35.8 per cent of the total, and JD 3,868 million held by the private sector, equalling 64.2 per cent of the total. (Al Aswaq)

THE BETTER HALF.

By Glasbergen

"Vitamin B comes from bread, vitamin C comes from citrus, vitamin H comes from hugs, vitamin K comes from kisses."

JUMBLE

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

SINBO

UNGT

HOGUNE

TEETIP

Look-water! Where? Where?

THIS IS WHAT A MIRAGE IS.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: EXPUL RANCH JETSAM TANGLE

Answer: What a developing actress wants to reach - THE NEXT STAGE

JD 44.6 m Hyatt Hotel contract signed

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Amman Tourism Investment Company Tuesday awarded Saudi Contractor Bin Ladin Tarencio firm a JD 44.640,866 contract for the construction of the Grand Hyatt Hotel-Amman and Zara Trade Centre (south).

The agreement was signed by the Amman Tourism Investment Company Board Chairman Khalil Talhouni and Mr. Al Moutaz Al Sawaf on behalf of the contractor.

The hotel, to be completed in May 1998, will have 297 standard guest rooms and 15 suites with a number of restaurants and meeting rooms together with indoor and outdoor swimming pool and a fully equipped fitness centre.

Beneath the hotel there will be four basements with extensive underground car parking.

The Zara centre which will be completed in July 1998 will be managed by the Hyatt Hotel and will contain 44 apartments of one to four bedrooms.

The complex will also contain an exhibition area in excess of 5,000 square metres in area and a large auditorium.

Under the agreement, the Hyatt International Corporation will operate the Hotel for a period of 15 years.

The Holding Company for the group, Zara Investment (holding) company was established in 1994 with a JD 15 million capital, increased later to JD 40 million.

Taipei to host Taiwan-Israel economic conference

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan and Israel, which do not recognise each other, will hold a conference in Taipei to boost economic and technological cooperation, a Taiwan official said on Tuesday.

"This is the second such conference between Taiwan and Israel. The first conference was held in Tel Aviv and it was quite a success," the official said.

The Israeli delegation is led by Yehoshua Gleitman, director general of the ministry of industry and trade.

The sides would discuss trade, investment, and technology cooperation during the meeting, the official said.

JORDAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - JORDAN											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 03/12/1996											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P/E	DIV. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	PERCENT	MARKET SHARE
259,500	205,000	ARAB BANK	12.2	1.12	15	440	114220	256.50	256.00	-.02	1.52
1,560	1,210	BANK OF JORDAN	12.2	1.12	4	400	114220	256.50	256.00	-.02	1.52
1,250	880	MID-EAST INV. BK.	68.9	0.00	40	20000	24543	1.25	1.25	0.00	0.00
2,700	2,220	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	8.3	0.00	12	1700	27497	2.28	2.28	0.00	0.00
5,280	4,580	THE JORDANIAN BK.	12.2	1.12	12	1700	27497	2.28	2.28	0.00	0.00
3,040	2,440	JOR. KAWAT BANK	18.1	0.00	4	841	2107	2.49	2.50	0.01	0.00
1,200	880	JOR. GULF BANK	6.2	0.00	47	36253	103663	1.21	1.21	0.00	0.00
4,180	3,360	JOR. PEASANT BANK	26.7	0.00	12	1700	10094	3.42	3.42	0.00	0.00
3,730	3,000	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	9	0.00	19	4795	6939	1.82	1.76	-.06	0.00
3,800	3,000	JOR. INV. FID. BANK	19.2	0.00	2	350	531	3.36	3.36	0.00	0.00
1,590	1,000	PHILADEL. INV. BK.	9	0.00	12	6000	7640	1.29	1.29	0.00	0.00
BANK SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 126.20	CHG: -0.19	156	150767	302723					
2,910	1,830	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	5.4	10.44	11	4750	9057	1.90	1.92	0.02	0.00
2,400	1,850	ARAB LIFE INSUR.	7.4	7.62	11	1000	2106	2.10	2.12	0.02	0.00
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 117.45	CHG: -0.37	22	5750	11157					
1,900	1,450	JOR. ELECTRIC PHR.	12.4	6.72	126	109740	241594	1.76	1.79	0.03	0.00
1,560	1,210	IBRD ELECTRICITY	6.6	6.62	126	1250	1035	1.69	1.69	0.00	0.00
6,050	4,200	ARAB PHOSPHATE WKNES	16.2	0.00	8	1200	1228	4.80	4.80	0.00	0.00
1,960	1,080	NATL. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	112	110505	124094	1.25	1.31	0.06	0.00
1,260	590	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	32.3	0.00	12	1250	798	.63	.63	0.00	0.00
1,400	610	MACH. FOP. REST. MACH.	9	0.00	12	1250	798	.63	.63	0.00	0.00
2,300	1,650	MID. EAST HOTELS	98.9	0.00	2	750	1200	1.65	1.62	-.03	0.00
3,720	3,120	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	14.2	5.56	9	1300	166	3.60	3.60	0.00	0.00
1,270	1,000	ARAB EDUCATION	9	0.00	12	1250	798	.63	.63	0.00	0.00
2,440	1,990	UNITED CO.	9.9	8.12	26	1600	14767	2.82	2.83	0.01	0.00
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 114.43	CHG: -0.54	288	216645	519040					
1,260	1,040	ATTANQER	9	0.00	1	1050	1092	1.04	1.04	0.00	0.00
3,770	3,080	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.0	2.88	33	23700	82074	3.42	3.49	0.07	0.00
2,710	2,100	JOR. PHOSPHATE WKNES	31.9	0.00	3	30000	1260	3.06	3.15	0.09	0.00
5,960	4,780	ARAB POTASH CO.	17.6	3.45	7	6100	35360	5.00	5.50	0.50	0.00
10,550	8,720	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.4	5.57	15	2918	27174	9.30	9.33	0.03	0.00
1,590	1,210	WOLLEN INDUSTRIES	58.2	0.00	3	600	1035	2.29	1.21	-.02	0.00
3,750	3,000	INDUSTRIAL CORP. JORD.	12.2	0.00	11	4950	10927	2.10	2.11	0.01	0.00
8,150	6,420	JOR. WORTED MILLS	9.0	3.95	1	400	2620	7.00	7.09	0.09	0.00
4,870	3,040	ARAB PHARM. MANP.	15.9	5.52	52	25600	92625	3.45	3.42	-.03	0.00
1,760	1,300	JOR. PAPER CORP.	8.9	7.48	9	2150	3460	1.40	1.42	0.02	0.00
6,000	4,250	DAR ALDANA DV. INV.	13.7	3.99	59	41260	206876	4.93	5.01	0.08	0.00
5,800	3,130	ARAB ALUM. IND.	6.7	8.57	1	300	1096	3.40	3.60	0.20	0.00
1,960	1,450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.00	12	10970	6939	.62	.62	0.00	0.00
1,500	1,040	NATL. PAPER CORP. TRD.	8.1	8.72	7	2887	3434	1.28	1.29	0.01	0.00
1,090	540	NATIONAL INDS.	9.2	9.69	25	42200	26164	.59	.62	0.03	0.00
1,840	930	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	57	49550	55026	1.07	1.12	0.05	0.00
1,150	780	JOR. ROUGHNESS	23.8	0.00	3	1500	1228	.81	.82	0.01	0.00
3,550	2,280	UNIV. CHEM. INDS.	72.7	0.00	2	750	2058	2.74	2.75	0.01	0.00
4,250	2,130	NATL. CABLE WIRE. MPAC	14.7	0.00	12	1400	3368	2.80	2.82	0.02	0.00
1,350	870	JOR. SULPHO-CHEM	9	0.00	1	50	38	.72	.76	0.04	0.00
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS		INDEX: 115.25	CHG: -1.48	612	544870	926481					
GRAND TOTAL		INDEX: 153.63	CHG: -0.75	1070	1018032	1759400					
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR TUESDAY 03/12/1996											
N	P	COMPANY'S NAME	P/E	DIV. OF TRANS.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	PERCENT	MARKET SHARE
790	440	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	21.5	0.00	2	2000	560	.54	.56	0.02	0.00
800	510	JOR. TRADE FAC.	14.9	0.00	14	7500	4200	.53	.56	0.03	0.00
350	410	NATL. COOPER. CENTERS	10.0	0.00	14	8700	5529	.54	.57	0.03	0.00
1,500	1,050	ZARA FOR INVESTMENT	27.7	0.00	3	30000	42000	1.40	1.40	0.00	0.00
930	700	UNION INV. SO.	70.8	0.00	25	109550	26029	.71	.74	0.03	0.00
1,110	370	ARAB FID. INVEST.	9	0.00	4	3650	1643	.43	.45	0.02	0.00
950	690	AL-DAMIRIAH 75	15.6	0.00	5	5125	2305	.70	.69	-.01	0.00
640	340	JOR. INDS. MATCH-JEMCO	9	0.00	10	17900	7132	.40	.40	0.00	0.00
1,860	510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	9	0.00	6	2250	1495	.64	.66	0.02	0.00
1,760	1,300	NATL. CHLORINE	9	0.00	9	3300	4685	1.27	1.42	0.15	0.00
1,100	400	NATL. MULT. ENG. MANICO	6	0.00	6	18300	9083	.47	.49	0.02	0.00
810	430	HAYAK DIES & MACHS	9	0.00	12	11700	6903	.56	.59	0.03	0.00
780	430	ARAB ELECT. INDS.	9	0.00	6	52000	25480	.47	.49	0.02	0.00
1,310	1,020	UNION TOBACCO 75	9	0.00	2	34150	9240	.40	.43	0.03	0.00
840	570	RAMI PHARM. 55	9	0.00	16	26950	12128	.43	.45	0.02	0.00
830	390	INDS. ENG.	27.7	0.00	16	20250	17010	.80	.84	0.04	0.00
1,500	530	MID-EAST COMPLEX	8.3	0.00	37	77450	54685	.69	.71	0.02	0.00
GRAND TOTAL					240	471508	250256				
* New 12 months low											
* Stock dividend during the past 12 months											
* Listed during the past 12 months											
* P/E ratio is 100 or more											
* Negative P/E											
* Earning is zero or N/A for the most recent year											

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UEFA CUP

Hamburg face difficult test against Monaco

LONDON (R) — Hamburg face by far the toughest task of the three German clubs in Tuesday's UEFA Cup third round with a three-goal deficit to overturn at home to Monaco.

Their job has hardly been made easier by the suspension of midfielder Markus Schupp although they will at least have taken heart from their spirited draw at Bundesliga champions Borussia Dortmund on Friday.

Monaco, who have never reached the quarter-finals, are still adopting a cautious approach. "We must tackle this tie just as if we were level at 0-0. The Germans will be seeking revenge," said Monaco President Jean-Louis Campora.

Injury has robbed Monaco of three players. Enzo Scifo, Eric Di Meco and Emmanuel Petit, and they will also be without suspended Sylvain Legwinski. Swiss striker Marco Grassi and Belgian defender Philippe Leonard have both recovered from injuries and will be available.

German supporters will more realistically be looking to Karlsruhe and Schalke to continue national hopes.

Karlsruhe look to be in a comfortable position after their 3-1 away win at Bradford in the first leg, although they will be without the inspiration of the creative Thomas Haessler who has a

broken ankle.

Schalke have to overturn a 2-1 away defeat against club Brugge and will be without suspended midfielder Andreas Mueller. But the Belgian champions will be without leading striker Robert Spehar who is suspended and Belgium defender Dirk Medved who has a viral infection.

France's other UEFA Cup representatives Metz kept their hopes alive with a late equaliser at home to Newcastle in the first leg but still face an uphill task against the side lying second in the English League.

They will also face the threat of Alan Shearer who has scored in every home league match he has played for Newcastle since his world record 15 million pounds (\$25 million) transfer from Blackburn.

"We are telling ourselves that there's no logic in the game and we are ready to score an upset," said Metz striker Robert Pires.

But it will be difficult for the visitors who are depleted by injuries. Three key players, Pascal Pierre, Philippe Gaillot and Stephane Adam, are out while midfielder Cyril Serresdum is doubtful.

Feyenoord and Anderlecht will each fancy their chances of reaching the last eight after goalless first leg draws against Tenerife and Helsingborg respectively.

Feyenoord, second in the Dutch league, have few injury worries, with only Jean Paul Van Gastel out with a broken leg.

The Spanish side have slipped in their domestic league after a fine start and are now 13th after Saturday's 2-1 defeat at home by Rayo Vallecano.

Anderlecht, who have slipped to eighth in the Belgian First Division, their lowest in 26 years, hope to restore some pride by earning a place in the quarter-finals at the expense of their Swedish opponents.

Valencia take a 3-1 advantage into their second leg match at Besiktas of Turkey but have serious injury problems. Defenders Javi Navarro and Francisco Camarasa and midfielder Antonio Poyatos are all out but midfielder Fernando Gomez and defenders Ivan Campos and Jorge Otero have recovered and are probable starters.

Besiktas coach Rasim Kara blamed the three goals conceded in the first leg to "basic mistakes in defence."

Top scorer Ertugrul Saglam was injured in the first leg against Valencia and has not played since but Kara said he hoped to include him in the line-up.

Internazionale look to have the easiest task of the night when they visit Boavista of Portugal with a 5-1 advantage.

Liverpool outshine Spurs to join Arsenal on top

LONDON (R) — Liverpool pulled level with Arsenal at the top of the English Premier League Monday by comprehensively beating Tottenham 2-0 at White Hart Lane with goals on either side of halftime from Michael Thomas and Steve McManaman.

Tottenham, reeling from the humiliation of losing 6-1 to first division Bolton in the League Cup last week, and down after losing to arch-rivals Arsenal in the league eight days ago, showed plenty of spirit and determination but were never able to master the visitors.

Liverpool played with far more creativity and teamwork and, with more luck, could easily have had five.

The victory took Liverpool onto 31 points from 15 matches, the same total as Arsenal. But the gunners, who went top after beating Newcastle on Saturday, remain in first place because of their superior goal difference.

While Liverpool deserved their victory at an away ground where they have not lost for the last four seasons, they had the better of all the luck that was going in the early stages.

McManaman, the game's outstanding player, enjoyed the lion's share of it when his speculative low shot from the edge of the box four minutes into the second half hit a bump on the pitch and bounced over goalkeeper Ian Walker who looked set to make a routine save. That was the turning point and Tottenham were rarely in the hunt after that.

But there was no luck about Thomas' opener. The former Arsenal player scored on the stroke of halftime with a superbly placed angled shot which Walker could only get a despairing hand to.

Tottenham had a goal disallowed midway through the second half when Sol Campbell appeared to score but was adjudged to have fouled Liverpool goalkeeper David James.

Mavs beat Magic in OT; Raptors upset Rockets

ORLANDO (R) — Oliver Miller was the unlikely hero who led the Dallas Mavericks to a 108-102 overtime victory over the Orlando Magic Monday.

Miller, on his fourth team in five years and best-known for his weight, had just four points before taking a pass from Jason Kidd and dunking at the buzzer to tie the game at 94-94.

Then in OT, he scored seven straight Dallas points and had two blocks as the Mavericks opened a 103-98 lead with 30 seconds to go.

Miller had a season-high 13 points on 6-of-6 shooting. Chris Gatling had 25 points and 12 rebounds and Kidd handed out a season-high 18 assists for Dallas, which snapped a six-game road losing streak.

The Mavs won on the road for the first time since opening night at Denver and for just the second time in nine visits to Orlando. "Any win on the road is special for us," said Dallas guard Jim Jackson, who scored 17 points.

Rony Seikaly scored 26 points. Gerald Wilkins added 25 and Derek Strong 18 and 12 rebounds — all season highs — for the Magic, who dropped to 5-4 at home. Orlando was 37-4 at home last season.

"This was a very bad loss for us tonight," Orlando coach Brian Hill said. "I thought we had the game won, and unfortunately we didn't play with any poise or composure down the stretch."

The Magic, who already are without All-Star guard Penny Hardaway and outside threat Dennis Scott, lost guard Nick Anderson with a sprained right wrist less than seven minutes into the game. Although X-rays were negative, he had a soft cast placed on the wrist.

The Magic led throughout the fourth quarter but Darrell Armstrong's airball created a 24-second violation, giving Dallas the ball with 3.4 seconds to go.

"When we had 3.4 seconds left, Jason got me the ball and I just went up as quick as I could," the 280-pound (127 kg) Miller said. "When I dunked it, then I heard the buzzer and I was really happy."

"I just think we ran out of gas down the stretch," Wilkins said. "I think we allowed Miller to get off in OT. He used his big body to get the handle underneath."

In Toronto, Damon Stoudamire fell just two rebounds shy of a triple-double as the Raptors cooled off the Houston



Orlando Magic centre Rony Seikaly makes his move to the basket against Dallas Mavericks centre Eric Montross (L) and forward Chris Gatling (R) during first half action. Dallas defeated Orlando in overtime 108-102 (Reuters photo)

Rockets 100-89, handing them their first road loss of the season.

Stoudamire scored 27 points, grabbed eight rebounds and handed out 11 assists. All five Toronto starters scored in double figures.

Charles Barkley scored 30 points and pulled down 12 boards and Clyde Drexler scored 21 points and had 10 rebounds for Houston, which played without all-star centre Hakeem Olajuwon. Kevin Willis scored just five points in 25 minutes in Olajuwon's place.

The Rockets (15-2) fell to 8-1 on the road and were denied the best start in franchise history. Houston won its first 15 games in the

1993-94 season before splitting its next two.

Olajuwon was hospitalized for the second time in as many weeks on Sunday with a recurrence of atrial fibrillation. He did not make the trip to Toronto.

"It's always going to be a difficult game playing without him (Olajuwon)," Rockets coach Rudy Tomjanovich said. "We've won some big games without Hakeem. We beat the Lakers."

Toronto also played short-handed as rookie forward Marcus Camby sat out the game with a back sprain and forward Zoran Planinac did not play due to a sore left heel. The Raptors had just 10 players available and used seven, the lowest total in the

NBA this season. "It's tough to get motivated against a bad team," Barkley said. "Give them credit, they played well tonight. Obviously, they've lost seven of eight so they haven't played well, but tonight they were pumped for a team that's been as hot as we have."

At Utah, John Stockton had 22 points and 16 assists and Bryon Russell keyed a decisive fourth-quarter run with a pair of three-pointers to lead the Jazz to their 11th straight victory, 107-97 over the Charlotte Hornets.

Karl Malone scored 20 points and Russell finished with 12 for the Jazz, who have won eight in a row at home.



During a fund-raising gala for victims of AIDS, four tennis stars, (L to R) Yannick Noah, Martina Hingis, Monica Seles and Jimmy Connors pose in front of the SIDA foundation's poster before an exhibition match (Reuters photo)

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12 Pass 30 Pass

43 Pass Pass

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Sony unveils digital power production in Jordan

AT A press conference held on Monday, Sony Broadcast and Professional - Middle East and their distributor in Jordan, Zaki A. Ghul, unveiled Digital Power Production, a revolutionary and unique all-digital, totally integrated production system for the professional market. The system is being launched in Jordan this week at a major roadshow comprising full presentations and hands-on demonstrations.

This complete line-up of digital equipment — a complete 'system solution' — represents a quantum leap forward in corporate video production.

Speaking at the press conference, Robert Sherman, Senior Manager, Sales & Marketing, Professional Products, Sony Broadcast and Professional - Middle East, said Sony is offering a unique vision to the production professional.

"This is not about a format introduction. Rather we're launching a totally integrated, fully digital video production system which gives the market what it needs — high performance, easy-to-use, cost-effective systems. This means customers have new and exciting ways of making their programmes."

The Sony Corporation employs close to 140,000 people worldwide and has established an enviable reputation for its products and services. In 1995, Sony was ranked as one of the world's top three most respected brands via a survey among senior corporate executives in Fortune Magazine. In March 1996, a Harris Poll in the United States gave the company the number one position of all brands.

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Atlanta Falcon running back Craig Heyward (centre) is stopped by the defense of the San Francisco 49ers Dedrick Dodge (33) and Tim McDonald (46) in the first quarter December 2 at the Georgia Dome. San Francisco routed Atlanta 34-10 (Reuters photo)

49ers rout Falcons 34-10

ATLANTA (R) — Steve Young ran for two scores and threw for another and Terry Kirby had the first 100-yard rushing effort for San Francisco in two years as the 49ers routed the Atlanta Falcons, 34-10.

Young, who has been sharp since returning from a concussion nine days ago, completed 23-of-30 passes for 255 yards. Since returning from the injury he is 56-of-71 for 550 yards and has led the 49ers to a pair of conference victories.

"I did not plan the running game this way. It comes off the passing game," said Young, who had touchdown runs of 26 yards and 5 yards in the second quarter.

"I got hit twice in three weeks. I'm fine now. I know I have to avoid the big hit."

San Francisco (10-3) kept pace with the Green Bay Packers for the best record in the NFC and remained one game ahead of the Car-

olina Panthers, who visit San Francisco next week in a matchup that should determine the division title.

"Well, that was a very important win for us to have. We can enjoy this for the night home," 49ers coach George Seifert. "We have a very tough game next week against Carolina. We're facing a hell of a tough team in Carolina. As far as tonight's game is concerned I thought for the most part we executed on both sides of the ball and special teams."

"I think we're playing better, getting in our stride again," Young said. "There's still some frustration in the red zone."

Kirby became the first 49er to rush for 100 yards since Ricky Watters rushed for 105 yards against the New Orleans Saints on November 28, 1994. Kirby also caught a touchdown pass in the third quarter.

Jerry Rice had eight catches for 78 yards, all in

the first half as the 49ers racked up 342 yards of offense en route to a 25-3 lead.

Bobby Hebert was 10-of-25 for 113 and two interceptions for the Falcons, who have dropped five of their last six meetings with the 49ers. Atlanta fell to 2-11 and is tied with New Orleans for the worst record in the conference.

"I'm very disappointed at how we played, we played awful on offense, about as bad as I've been around," Falcons coach June Jones said.

"When we had guys open we couldn't hit them, when we had the ball there, they couldn't catch them. We did everything that made us look bad, they kicked our butts with their defense. It was frustrating on national TV. Everybody seemed ready to play, we just flat didn't get it done."

Sampras misses out on huge Christmas bonus

MUNICH (R) — World number one Pete Sampras has decided against flying to Munich to pick up one of the most lucrative Christmas bonuses in sport at this week's Grand Slam Cup.

But his late withdrawal, together with fellow-Americans Todd Martin and Michael Chang, will give Britain's Tim Henman, Sweden's Thomas Enqvist and Swiss Jakob Hlasek a chance to cash in on their good form during the year.

Sampras could have earned \$250,000 just for turning up at the \$6 million tournament which brings together the best performers of the year from the four Grand Slams — Wimbledon and the Australian, French and U.S. Opens.

As U.S. Open champion, Sampras was guaranteed the bonus together with Australian Open champion Boris Becker, French Open winner Yevgeny Kafelnikov and Wimbledon champion Richard Krajicek who are all playing.

Even if the American, who won a dramatic five-set final against Becker in last month's ATP World Championship, had lost in the first round he would have walked away from the southern German city with the first-round loser's cheque of \$100,000.

But officials said on Sunday both Sampras and Chang were pulling out of the event because of ankle problems while Martin had a long-standing elbow injury.

Jordan makes its mark in World Championship horse show

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

ABDULFATTAH SALEH became the first Arab handler to achieve a placing in the World Championship horse show when Jordanian bred Scudly was chosen one of the elite top ten of the world at the championship held at the Salon Du Cheval in Paris, France.

Scudly, owned and bred by Al Khair Stud of Jordan, placed second in his class out of 14 other previous champions before qualifying to the elite top ten.

Following the show judges and officials congratulated Her Royal Highness Princess Alia and asked her to convey their admiration to Scudly's breeders and their appreciation of his being handled by a Jordanian at this very high level of competition.

The world championships are only open to champion or reserve champions at major shows. Scudly had been crowned supreme champion at the Arabian Horse Show which was held in Amman in September.

In Paris Scudly got 455 points out of 500, two points below the group winner, former world champion Taladdin of Germany.

The senior male championship finally went to Khemali of Germany with the Australian born Sadik second.

The female champion was the grey Pearl Mae from England with Padron's Mist as reserve from France. Both these horses were bought as champions.

Al Khair Stud is one of the only two breeders who won at this show with a horse bred by the owners.

The junior male champion was G. Tamin of Qatar, with Koronec of Germany second. The junior female was Basara Saiyana from Germany with Amazon of the UK second.

The judges were: Barbie De Preaux of France, Col. Farouq El Abawi of Oman, Isabella Zawadzka of Poland, Princess Theresa De Bourbon of Spain, Angela Angold of England, Douglas Dahmen of the U.S. and Hans Nabel of Germany.

Japan aim to prove themselves 'emperor of Asia'

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The bitter rivalry between Japan and South Korea threatens to dominate the Asian Nations Football Cup which begins Wednesday.

Both countries had bid for the right to become the first Asian country to host the World Cup in 2002, but before a vote could be taken earlier this year, FIFA President Joao Havelange announced that the two enemies would co-host football's biggest tournament.

It was an amazing about-turn by Havelange, who had previously insisted that co-hosting would take place over his dead body.

Last month Japanese officials admitted that Havelange's dramatic 'volte face' was forced upon him when his firm favourites, Japan, risked losing the vote.

Although both sides agreed at a special meeting in Zurich last month that the 2002 World Cup final would be played in Tokyo, the key differences over financing have still to be agreed and a victory here would strengthen both sides bargaining positions.

Japan came into the competition as defending champions and the first Asian nation to make the top 20 in the FIFA rankings.

But they won the title on home territory and despite their FIFA position only South Korea have regularly qualified for the World Cup finals.

Japan have had wins over Poland, Yugoslavia and Mexico in their buildup but South Korea, who had to qualify, have been equally impressive.

The Koreans scored 17 goals in their three qualifying matches without conceding a single goal. They trounced Guam 9-0 before seeing off Taiwan 4-0 and then Vietnam, also 4-0.

But previous Asian Cup winners Saudi Arabia, along with China, threaten to gatecrash the South Korea-Japan party.

China have been drawn in Group C with Japan, Uzbekistan and Syria but with the top two from each of the three groups going through Japan should be assured of reaching the quarterfinals.

South Korea in Group A, have the easier of the draw. Their group composes United Arab Emirates, Indonesia and Kuwait.

But it is Group B that poses the biggest threat. Saudi Arabia, one of the favourites to reach at least the semifinals, must take on Iran, Iraq and Thailand.

Although Thailand had problems qualifying, nearly going down to Singapore, they nevertheless won the Tiger Cup earlier this year.

They also won the South East Asian Games in 1995. But the Group B joker is Iraq, playing in their first Asian Cup finals for 20 years.

"Due to United Nations-imposed sanctions the gulf haven't seen much of our team. This tournament will give us an opportunity to display our impeccable talent," warned Iraqi coach Yahya Alwan.

To prepare for the tournament Iraq moved to Europe to train and even managed to defeat Italian Serie A side Sampdoria 1-0.

But Alwan will be without four of his senior players because of injury, including striker Ahmed Radi.

However, the 39-year-old Alwan insists he has enough cover in his squad to make up for his absent stars.

Host nation United Arab Emirates also took the European route to prepare for the Asian Cup finals and last March they won their first international tournament when they beat South Korea, Morocco and drew with Egypt to lift the Emirates international tournament in Dubai.

But organisers are hoping for a South Korea-Japan showdown. A clash between Asia's two strongest football nations would only increase the prestige of the Asian Cup.

Groups

Group A (Abu Dhabi) UAE, Indonesia, Kuwait, South Korea.
Group B (Dubai) Saudi Arabia, Iran, Iraq, Thailand
Group C (Al Ain) Japan, China, Uzbekistan, Syria

Hussein meet Faisali in upcoming 14th week

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — With the second leg of the Premier League soccer competition reaching its halfway point, Al Wihdat still have a narrow lead atop the standings with 30 points following their latest 2-0 important win over Al Hussein.

Al Ramtha, upset 3-1 by Kufroum last week, open the 14th week of the competition when they meet Al Qoqazi in Amman Wednesday. Going into the match, Al Ramtha are still second while Al Qoqazi are back in last

place after their 1-1 draw with Al Ahli.

Shabab Al Hussein who lost 4-1 to Al Jazireh last week dropped to eighth and will next play fifth placed Al Ahli Thursday.

Three matches are scheduled for Friday with leaders Al Wihdat meeting Kufroum in Mafrag, Al Qadissieh who are now seventh meet last weeks biggest movers Al Jazireh in Amman.

The third match might in Irbid is undoubtedly the most awaited as Al Hussein meet former champions Al Faisali with both teams hoping a win will advance their standing.

Schedule (all matches start at 2:30 p.m.)

Wed 4/12 Qoqazi-Ramtha Amman
Thursday 5/12 Shabab Al Hussein — Ahli Amman
Friday 6/12 Kufroum — Wihdat Mafrag
Friday 6/12 Qadissieh — Jazireh Amman
Friday 6/12 Hussein — Faisali Irbid

STANDINGS before 14th week

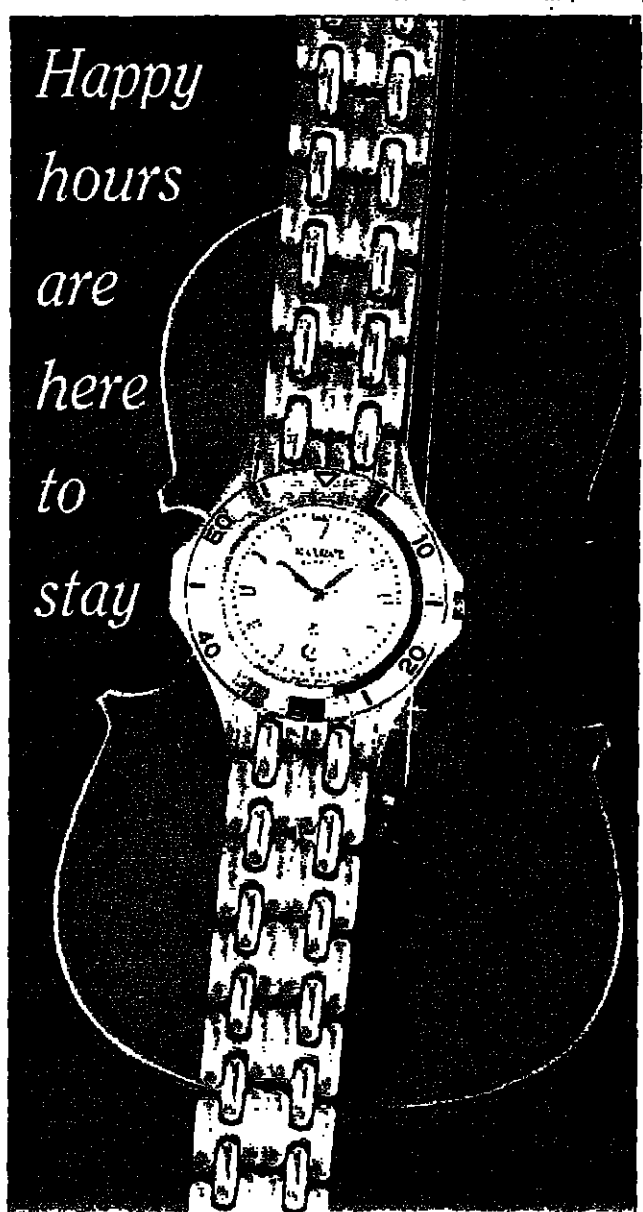
Team	P	W	D	L	GF	GA	Pts
Wihdat	13	9	3	1	26	5	30
Faisali	13	8	4	1	22	9	28
Ramtha	13	6	4	3	18	12	22
Hussein	13	5	6	2	19	15	21
Ahli	13	4	7	2	23	16	19
Jazireh	13	3	4	6	9	13	13
Qadissieh	13	2	6	5	16	21	12
S. Hussein	13	2	4	7	13	26	10
Kufroum	13	1	6	6	11	25	9
Qoqazi	13	1	4	8	11	26	7

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Israel says it will expand W. Bank, Gaza colonies to 'accommodate growth'

Israel seized more than 50% of land since 1967

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (Agencies) — Israel plans to expand Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to accommodate population growth, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in remarks broadcast Tuesday.

Speaking to European leaders in Lisbon, Portugal, Mr. Netanyahu said he was seeking to expand settlements considerably to block the creation of a Palestinian state.

"Our settlement policy... does not fundamentally change the situation on the ground as they are trying to say," Mr. Netanyahu said in remarks broadcast on Israeli army radio.

"There is natural growth of settlements as we always said there would be," Mr. Netanyahu said.

He spoke a day after he approved the construction of 474 new homes in the West Bank's Jordan Valley. About 145,000 Jewish settlers live in the West Bank and Gaza, amid 2 million Palestinians.

Israeli peace activists said Tuesday that Mr. Netanyahu's government has already approved the construction of thousands of new homes in settlements — far beyond what would be needed to accommodate natural growth.

The government reportedly is also planning to restore subsidies and tax breaks for settlers in an attempt to lure more Israelis to the West Bank and Gaza.

The Arab League warned this week that Israel's settlement policy could halt the peace process and Palestinian minister Imad Falouji on Tuesday called the settlements "a buried mine which one day will explode the region."

Israel army radio quoted Mr. Netanyahu as telling European leaders that he promised in the May election campaign that he would boost settlement construction.

tion, and that he did not intend to let down those who voted for him. Mr. Netanyahu said construction starts had been delayed largely because of budget problems.

Foreign Minister David Levy said Tuesday the government was not establishing new settlements and only planned to do the "minimum necessary" to keep up with population growth in the Jewish settlements.

In a related development, the daily Yediot Achronot reported Tuesday that Jews living abroad had raised \$40 million in the past three months to buy land and Arab properties in and around the West Bank town of Hebron, in East Jerusalem, the Golan Heights and the Naqab desert.

The fund-raising was being done with the knowledge, or sometimes even the encouragement of government agencies.

A Yediot survey has found that hundreds of properties have already been bought from Palestinian owners in Hebron and East Jerusalem.

Talks of a Hebron troop pullback have raised property prices in Hebron, especially next to the five Jewish enclaves. Prices for apartments next to settler compounds have reached \$1 million, the newspaper said.

The acquisition campaign is also targeting property held by Druze in the Golan Heights and lands in the northern Naqab region south of Hebron, it said.

Yediot Achronot said the purchases are carried out discreetly via Palestinian lawyers and that monies are transferred through special associations and funds to avoid political interference.

But the newspaper said some government officials, including the ultra-orthodox deputy housing minister, Meir Porush, were aware of and supported the campaign. The purchasers, mostly

Jewish investors of Iranian origin living in Los Angeles, plan to take possession of their new property in Hebron as soon as the government and Palestinian National Authority sign an agreement on the transfer of power in the city, it said.

Land seizures

Israel has confiscated over half the land in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since occupying them in 1967 and confiscations have continued during the peace process, the Palestinian Information Ministry said Tuesday.

Land confiscated by Israel in the Palestinian territories since 1967 totals 300,000 hectares, over 51 per cent of the total area of the West Bank and Gaza, the ministry said in a report.

Since September 1993, when Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) signed the declaration of principles leading to self-rule, Israel has confiscated 30,000 hectares of land, the report said.

In the West Bank, 74 per cent of the land has been confiscated, while 40 per cent of Gaza has been expropriated.

Confiscations reached their peak during 1994, after the signing of the first Oslo self-rule accord, when 900 hectares a month were taken by Israeli authorities.

The land was used primarily for Jewish settlements in the occupied territories and settler bypass roads, as well as 1,921 hectares for quarries for Israeli use.

Israel has also confiscated 33 per cent of the land in Arab East Jerusalem to build settlements, the report said.

Over 180 kilometres of bypass roads, used by settlers to avoid Palestinian population centres, have been built in the West Bank and Gaza since 1993, it said.



Palestinians demonstrate on a disputed hilltop near the Efrat Jewish settlement in the West Bank on Tuesday against settlers' plans to expand their enclave (Reuters photo)

Japan-Jordan ties are based on shared values, mutual support — ambassador

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Japan's relations with Jordan are not simply those of donor and recipient of aid but based on interests and values that the countries share and the mutual support the two extend to each other in the international scene, the Japanese ambassador to Jordan said Tuesday.

Ambassador Takayuki Kimura, addressing an Amman Rotary Club luncheon, also said Jordan was one of the few countries with whom Japan never had any policy differences and Tokyo highly appreciated the Kingdom's contribution to regional security and stability.

Peace and stability in the region is in Japan's interest as well in view of Japan's role as one of world's leading economies, said the ambassador.

Describing Japanese-Jordanian relations as excellent, Mr. Kimura, who took office in Amman last year after serving as deputy chief of mission of his country's embassy in Washington, outlined three main elements that characterise the relationship.

"We do not have a historical legacy" that impedes the development of bilateral ties, he noted in a reference to the clouds over his country's relations with some of its neighbours caused by World War II.

Similarly, Japan and Jordan do not have any political or military ambitions that would have an impact on the relationship, he noted.

Finally, Japan, which went through very difficult economic conditions and hardships after World War II, clearly understands Jordan's problems and is in a position to extend economic assistance aimed at helping the Kingdom stand on its feet, said the ambassador.

Japanese interest in developing ties with Jordan stems from Tokyo's belief that the Kingdom is key to peace in the Middle East and it has a good policy that deserves support in addition to the good status of bilateral relations as well as ties between the royal families of the two countries, he added.

Japan and Jordan coordinate very well at international fora and Tokyo could always count on the Kingdom's support for its positions, he noted. "Jordan is an active supporter of Japan's bid to join the U.N. Security Council as a permanent member," Mr. Kimura cited an example.

Japan and Jordan have similarities in some areas, he said, pointing out that both countries have no oil and no other natural resource that bring in foreign currency.

"You have to survive and stand on your own before pursuing other goals," he said.

"Exports or death" was the slogan that Japan adopted in the 50s and 60s as the key means to bring in foreign currency to pay for its food needs, and the industrial development of Japan stemmed from this approach, he said. Tourism was another revenue earner for Japan but nowhere near the foreign currency brought in, he added.

Drawing from his own experience, Japan is focusing on assistance to Jordan to develop its industrial base through a sound policy as well as the tourism sector through the right infrastructure and support services, he said.

Japan is conducting a study on industrialisation in the southern parts of Jordan and is also considering significant assistance to the Kingdom's master plan to develop tourism.

Between 1990 and 1994, Japanese assistance to Jordan was worth \$855 million, or nearly 40 per cent of

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Sheikh Zayed reelected as president of UAE

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Tuesday reelected its long-serving president for another five-year term, ending speculation about an imminent power change in the oil producer.

Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, 79, was reelected at a late night meeting on Monday by his partners in the Federal Supreme Council (FSC), the highest decision-making body in the 25-year-old federation.

"His selection again quashed all rumours that have spread recently about a change in the leadership," Western diplomat said.

"The rumours were three-month absence and his neck surgery in the United States. Some had expected him to abdicate."

Sheikh Zayed became president of the UAE when it was created in 1971 from the merger of seven sheikhdoms known as the Trucial States under British rule.

He is considered the architect of the federation, which was announced a day after Britain ended its colonial presence on December 1 of that year.

The Gulf Arab leader had to spend more than two years shuttling between the Emirates to persuade their leaders to unite.

His promise they would continue to enjoy autonomy within their areas and the vast oil wealth that gushed out in his own emirate brought them together.

Sheikh Zayed is also ruler of Abu Dhabi, by far the biggest and richest member of the UAE. He came to power in 1966, when his tribe ruled that he should replace his late brother, Sheikh Shakhbut. When he returned from the United States last

month, there was growing speculation that the president, looking pale and tired, would quit power.

Sheikh Zayed has many sons and despite his ailment and old-age he appeared to be in control when he was shown on state-run television during a national day military parade on Monday and the FSC's night meeting.

He spoke of what has been achieved from the merger of the previously seven poor emirates and urged his fsc partners to work for more prosperity.

The leader, his neck still bandaged, said there had been no differences among the seven emirates since the merger.

"This is a boon, for which we shall thank God the Almighty," he said. "I hope you will intensify efforts to make more achievements for the people."

The UAE groups Abu Dhabi with Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah and Umm Al Quwain in a political, defence and economic union, regarded as the strongest integration process in modern Arab history.

The FSC is headed by Sheikh Zayed and is made up of the rulers of the emirates. It meets in the capital Abu Dhabi once a year to review the country's internal and external policy and endorse major decisions.

Many in the UAE associate the president with economic prosperity as he has lavished funds on infrastructure and other development projects to turn the UAE into one of the most modern states in the Middle East.

On his return to Abu Dhabi from surgery in the United States, he was greeted with a bouquet of 300,000 flowers, the biggest in the world.

GCC head hails Doha stand on Israel ties

DOHA (AFP) — Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) Secretary General Jamil Al Hujailan on Tuesday welcomed Qatar's decision to freeze the process of normalising relations with Israel.

In a statement, Mr. Hujailan said Qatar's position "is based on principles of Arab nationalism and is designed to ensure that no concessions are made over the legitimate national rights of the Palestinian people."

He added in the statement published by the Qatari News Agency QNA that Qatar's stand is "without a doubt the position of all the Arab states."

Mr. Hujailan accused Israel of "erecting obstacles to the peace process which will not lead to a fair and comprehensive peace in the Middle East."

Qatar and Oman are the only two members of the GCC to have begun normalising relations with Israel and the Jewish state has opened a trade office in the two countries.

Qatar, following the election of right-wing Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu as Israel's prime minister in May, announced that it was putting the brakes on the normalisation process.

Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani, the Qatari leader, said Monday that Doha would not demand the closure of the Israeli trade office but that it would not take any further steps towards normalisation.

The GCC's other members are Bahrain, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

Bahrain confirms it will boycott summit, will try two Qataris

MANAMA (Agencies) — Bahrain on Tuesday confirmed that it will boycott the upcoming Gulf Arab summit in Doha because of a territorial dispute with Qatar.

The official Bahraini daily Akhbar Al Khaleej said Bahrain's ruler Sheikh Issa Ben Salman Al Khalifa had sent a message to this effect to his "brother" Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani of Qatar, who had proposed coming to Manama in person to issue an invitation to the Dec. 7-9 summit in Doha.

The press in Bahrain, which reflects the official view, said Monday that Bahrain had no choice but to boycott the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit after it arrested two Qataris on charges of spying for Qatar.

Bahraini officials said Tuesday that the trial of the two Qataris arrested on spying charges would open here on Wednesday.

They said that lawyers had been appointed to defend Salwa Jassim Mohammad Fakhr, a 33-year-old Qatari woman who has allegedly confessed to espionage, and Fahd Hamad Abdullah Al Bakker, 28, an alleged Qatari intelligence officer.

Qatar has denied that the two Qataris arrested in Bahrain were involved in espionage activities and

accused Bahrain of seeking to torpedo the GCC summit.

"We deny categorically the Bahraini statement implicating two Qatari citizens in spying," the Interior Ministry said. It voiced "surprise" that such charges should come "at a time when Qatar is preparing to host the summit."

Bahrain had previously vowed to boycott the summit, saying Qatar had failed to show good faith in resolving their competing claims to the Hawar islands and sandbanks in the area.

Bahrain has accused Qatar of having taken advantage of a GCC summit in Doha in December 1990 to force it to sign a memorandum of understanding calling on Manama to take their dispute to the International Court of Justice.

Manama insists an Arab solution should be found to the dispute.

Saudi Arabia has been trying to mediate the dispute but has not made much headway as indicated by the Bahrain decision not to attend the GCC summit.

Other members of the council, notably Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), have also been trying to convince Bahrain to drop its objections and attend the summit in Doha.

Beilin enters race for Labour's leadership

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Former Israeli cabinet minister Yossi Beilin, a proponent of a Palestinian state, announced his candidacy on Tuesday to succeed Shimon Peres as leader of the main opposition Labour Party in internal elections in June.

Political analysts said Mr. Beilin stood little chance of defeating former army chief Ehud Barak, the leading candidate in the race, but by contesting the primary election he would be in line for a senior cabinet position if Labour regained power.

Israeli elections for prime minister, last held in May and won by right-wing Likud Party chief Benjamin Netanyahu, are next scheduled for the year 2000.

"Shimon Peres announced that he will not run (in June) ... therefore I decided to stand for party chief and prime minister in the next government," Mr. Beilin, a Labour member of parliament, told a news conference.

"After Shimon pulled out, I felt there was no one heading the school of thought he represented, giving the right balance between peace and security," he said.

Mr. Beilin is author of a peace plan formulated with senior Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official Mahmoud Abbas, that calls for the formation of a demilitarised Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza linked in a confederation with Jordan.

On the left wing of Labour, Mr. Beilin was once described by assassinated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin as "Peres' poodle".

Former Health Minister Ephraim Sneh has also announced he will run in the Labour election.

At Tuesday's press conference Mr. Beilin said he was "the only person capable of effectively pursuing the policies of Mr. Peres, the only policies which offer a real vision of peace and security" for Israel.

Considered a centrist within the Labour camp, Mr. Beilin has been intimately involved in the peace process since the first contacts between the government of the late Premier Rabin and the PLO in 1992.

He was a leading negotiator of the Oslo peace accords signed in 1993 and 1995 and then led behind-the-scenes negotiations with Mr. Abbas on possible scenarios for a permanent Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

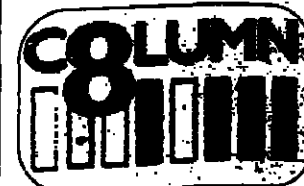
A one-time journalist, Mr. Beilin served as economy minister and then as deputy foreign minister to Mr. Peres in the Rabin government.

After Mr. Peres took over the government following the November 1995 assassination of Rabin, Mr. Beilin assumed the newly created ministerial portfolio in charge of the peace process.

Israeli political commentators consider Mr. Barak the current front-runner for the opposition leadership since his military past and image as a security hardliner give him an advantage in undermining the right-wing support for Mr. Netanyahu.

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Diana's ex-lover convicted of drunken driving

OKEHAMPTON, England (R) — Princess Diana's former lover, James Hewitt, was banned from driving for one year and fined £450 (\$758) after being convicted of drunken driving. Hewitt, 38, had pleaded not guilty to the charge of driving with excess alcohol in his blood. Police breathalysed the former cavalry officer after another car drove into his vehicle last August and found he was over the legal alcohol limit. The magistrate in the court in Okehampton, southwestern England, told Hewitt he was not at fault in the accident, but it did not alter the fact he was driving over the legal limit. Diana, who was divorced from heir-to-the-throne Prince Charles in August, admitted her affair with Hewitt in a television interview last November.

Burt Reynolds files for bankruptcy

WEST PALM BEACH, Florida (R) — Actor Burt Reynolds filed for Chapter 11 protection under federal bankruptcy laws, declaring debts of more than \$10 million, his attorney said. Reynolds, 58, was divorced from actress Lori Anderson more than a year ago and owns a ranch and dinner theatre near Jupiter in South Florida. Mark Bloom, an attorney for Reynolds, said the actor decided to file for protection under bankruptcy laws to win some "breathing space to focus on his career" and come up with a plan to repay his creditors. "It's not unusual for an individual who is having temporary business problems to propose a plan under Chapter 11 to pay his creditors more than they would receive under a Chapter 7 liquidation," Bloom said. The bankruptcy petition listed debts of more than \$10 million, and Bloom said Reynolds had assets of "slightly less than \$10 million." The debts, which include some disputed ones, are due to unprofitable business investments.

Lloyd Webber says time for a curtain call

WASHINGTON (R) — Britain's Andrew Lloyd Webber, who has dazzled theatre audiences for two decades and who opens "Whistle Down the Wind" this week, said it might now be time for a breather in his career. "This is the first time I can truthfully say that I don't have an idea for a show at all," Lloyd Webber told a luncheon at the National Press Club. In often humorous remarks that touched on music, architecture, art and critics, the creator of megahits like "Cats," "Phantom of the Opera," "Evita," and "Sunset Boulevard" said the only thing he had in mind right now was writing a book about his art collection. "At this point, I've written more musicals than Rodgers and Hammerstein did when they were together," he said. "Perhaps it's time to take stock of things and recharge the batteries."

Security summit a big snore for some

LISBON (R) — Listening to more than 50 leaders deliver their speeches at a European security summit can be a tedious challenge even for the most attentive of political ears. Swiss President Jean-Pascal Delamuraz, seated at the long, oval table in Lisbon with other heads of state and government, stole a few seconds to catnap before addressing the meeting himself.

After gourmet Portuguese hosts had laid on a hearty VIP lunch, eagle-eyed observers spotted the Swiss leader — still wearing his simultaneous translation earphones — with his head back, eyes closed and jaw ajar. Switzerland has the honour of chairing the 54-nation organisation for security and cooperation in Europe.

Bahrain opens trial of Qataris

MANAMA